

A. Parthasarathy

GLIMPSES OF 7522

Philosophy & Mysticism

Collected articles from *Brahmavadin*

JOHN SPIERS

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A collection of John Spiers writings. He was sincere to the core. His spiritual understanding is deep & profound. Persons like him are seldom found in this world."

Swami Nirmalananda

Viswa Shanthi Niketan

C. S. GUPTA

SATSANGA SEVA SAMITHI

Gandhi Bazar, Bangalore-560 004

7522

Glimpses of
Philosophy and Mysticism
(Selected articles from a collection)



Edited by
C. S. GUPTA

SAHAYOGA KITA SAMITI

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JOHN SPIERS

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INTRODUCTION

Swami John Spiers arrived in India in 1930 at the age of twenty one. His interest in India went back sometime earlier, when at the age of fourteen he first read the *Bhagavad Gita* given to him by a friend at the Theosophical Society in Perth, Scotland. In Calvinist Scotland during the 1920s, being a member of such an organisation amounted to heresy, but it was because of the Theosophists and their all embracing vision that he and other Europeans were first introduced to the *Gita*, *Upanishads*, *Tao Teh Khing*, the Sufis and Zen Buddhists, and other contemplative mystical traditions. Later while living and working in London he met many Indians connected with the Independence Movement, and in 1930 he left for India, not returning to the West until 1961 for a brief visit.

What all spiritual traditions in India stand for is *moksha* or spiritual freedom. This is not only true of the many Hindu paths or ways, but is also true of Buddhism, Jainism and the Sikh and Sufi traditions. The seeker has a choice. There are many doors the individual has the choice to pass through, but in the final analysis they all lead to the same goal. It is also a fact that polemical literature has a secondary place in India. It is the source books, those inspirational guides that live on. There are hundreds of *Gita* commentaries but only one *Gita*, and the same can be said for the *Upanishads* and the equally valuable Tamil *Tirukkural* or the inspirational compositions of Basavanna, Manikavachakar, Akkamahadevi, Yogi Vemana, Mirabai, Jnaneswar, up to and including in this century, Ramana Maharshi and Narayana Guru.

It is the tradition of *moksha*, of joy and peace in the Absolute, that appealed to Swami John Spiers. He was always hard pressed to answer when someone asked him what particular philosophy he stood for. He really did not stand for any particular single philosophy as such. I myself, who was his disciple for almost twenty years, and quite intimate with him over that period, can only say that temperamentally he was suited to all philosophies of a contemplative and mystical nature, be they called Hindu, Taoist, Buddhist, etc. I remember once asking him what works were most influential in his life. He said that besides the *Enneads* of the Greek sage Plotinus, he would have to include from the East the *Gita*, *Upanishads*, the writings of Chuang Tze, and the *Tao Teh Khing* of Lao Tze, and of them all, the last named was perhaps his favourite, if favourites one must have. I know he had a great love for the gentle and humourous wisdom of Taoism, and this led him to write a commentary on the *Tao Teh Khing* and make a rendition of Chuang Tze's writings, which appeared in the monthly magazine *Values* which he edited and published from 1955 to 1974.

I think Swamiji's great contribution was the research he did in showing what the traditions of the East have in common with the Pagan traditions of Europe, whose autochthonous roots have inspired Europeans up to the present day. He showed how the ancients of Europe also had their *ashramas* and their spiritual successions and traditions (*parampara-sampradaya*), and their wise men and women like Pythagoras, Hypatia, Plato, Plotinus, Sosipatra, Iamblichus, Sappho, Diogenes, Sopater, Diotima Julianus, Democritus, Antisthenes, to name a few. We

know this to be the case when we read the writings of Diogenes Laertius who wrote a *Lives of the Philosophers*. In India we still have this living spirituality. It quietly persists, and will continue to persist without any lurid fanfare or pulp magazine coverage, because it is part of the overall Hindu tradition. It is what gives Hinduism its great value. It is what makes the Hindu tradition free and open, ridding it of all narrow "isms."

The true *Guru* is also a *Jivanmukta*, and in this sense the two terms are synonymous. It is not any particular sect or cult or ego-personality which is important, but *moksha* itself and the *guru-sishya* relationship, which when recognised in its finality or *siddhanta* is not two but one. It is also beyond fixed creeds and narrow stifling dogma, and is what gives full depth to the Hindu Way. This in itself is of universal significance. There are many great names in Hinduism, yet all of them dissolve in the Name of Names, *Brahman* the absolute. This gives India its basic tolerance in spiritual matters, however intolerant people may sometimes behave in other less important things. This is also reflected in the general atmosphere in India, and this is what Swami John Spiers found so overwhelming when he first arrived in 1930. For him India was not only a land of new things and sights to see, but it was his first experience among people who have this basic tolerance. Often he said that Hindus are tolerant yet they are not aware of this nor do they preach this, but they simply and naturally are tolerant in spiritual matters. How true this is. However deplorable our conditions, both secular and spiritual, might otherwise be in the year 1981, this still persists. It is a question of leaving one's neighbour alone, of allowing

others to have their own views and practises, of arguing and even criticising, but never forcing one's views on others, and never, never hurting and killing them over the mere question of belief. This is a negative virtue, unlike the highly touted positive virtue of "spreading the good news" of a one-and-only man-god on a cross. This negative virtue has, I think, a greater and profounder meaning, because it is rooted in a state of being and not merely in a state of outward activity.

In 1952 Swami John Spiers took *sannyasa* and founded his Ashram near the village of Kaggalipura which is thirteen miles south of Bangalore, where he remained until his *Samadhi* in 1979. It was in the year 1965 that we first met Sri C. S. Gupta and Dr. M. V. Krishna Rao, founder Editor of revived *Brahmavadin*. They came for a visit and told us they were going to begin again publishing the quarterly magazine *Brahmavadin* which was originally started by Swami Vivekananda and his disciple Alasinga Perumal in the 1890s. Swamiji contributed articles when they requested him, and now our friend, C. S. Gupta, who it has been our privilege and joy to know since our first auspicious meeting, has collected some of the articles to make a book. He has asked me to write an introduction, which I have gladly done, all time realising that the best introduction is Swami John Spier's writings themselves

Nidagallu, Kanakapura

Swami Shaktidhara

July, 1981

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WHAT INDIA MEANS TO ME

I came to this country 35 years ago. I was 23, and an idealist in full accord with India's aspirations for self-government. I was brought up in a working class family in cold mountainous Scotland, a country physically as different from India as you can imagine. I remember as a child crying because of the bitterness of the freezing weather, the ice and snow. The very thought of a land of sunshine made me try my hardest to get there as soon as I could, somehow.

How India Came into my Life

But why India? you may ask. There are so many warm countries under the sun—Mexico, Malaya, the South Sea Islands, Africa, Brazil, and so on. Well, India has always endeared itself as a name of wonder to the European. My father had been a soldier for years in India, and so had his friends. So as a child I heard much about India. And then during my schooldays, when I began to explore the books that interested me on ancient civilizations, like those of ancient Egypt and Babylon and Greece, I found myself drawn to the source-land of the Orient, to India.

And so, at the age of fourteen or so, I was reading all I could find on India. I remember well first reading the Bhagavad Gita and I remember too, reading the poetry of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. I wonder how many Indians themselves at that age take such an interest in these things I wonder whether they know at all about Mrs. Naidu. I was stirred to read her verses to India.

It is strange how little one sees of Mrs. Naidu's poetry on the book-stalls. She is in oblivion like many other great stalwarts of the India of my time. The book-shops seem either to have just sexy paper-backs on the one side and stodgy technical stuff about mechanics and business management and mathematics on the other hand.

To continue: there was a very active branch of the Theosophical Society in my home-town, Perth. When I found that their main interest was India, both in regard to their doctrines as well as politically, through Mrs. Annie Besant's activities—another underservedly forgotten heroine of those days—I joined the Society and had a great enlargement of contact through their version of India.

I liked the Theosophists because, in spite of all their esoteric beliefs and their garbled mixture and interpretations of Indian and Asiatic thought, they at least touched the source-books and, more important, they were rebels against the dominant monopolist Christian Theology, which was the only religious view-point that I knew. I have to mention here my gratitude to these friends of India for opening out my religious attitude and for converting me to Paganism.

Impact with India

Then I began to meet Indians themselves, most of them students, Punjabi medical students in Dundee, others in Edinburgh, law students in London and Indian journalists, and I remember attending a lecture on India given by Krishna Menon at the huge London home of a duchess in Park Lane. That was in 1929. I was very naif I suppose, and swallowed everything Indians told me, treating them

all with respect as if they were *Sarvajnas* (know-alls). I was however critical of Gandhi, after reading his autobiography, subtitled *My Experiments with Truth*, in its khaddar jacket. Even at that time, although I fully sympathised with his motives, I considered him too harsh, too austere. I still think so, but now for better reasons. As for fasting and other austerities, just let me say, in passing that the Bhagavad Gita condemns such acts very clearly in chapter xvii, verses 5 and 6.

“Those men who practise terrible austerities not ordained by the scripture, given to egotistic demonstrations, desire, passion and power, torturing all the organs of the body, and harassing Me even seated in the body, know them to be of demonic conviction.”

I know that you cannot experiment with truth. A fact or a conclusion is either true or not true, and you either know it to be so or not. Putting action before knowledge is the cart before the horse. It is the fatal blunder that Sankara condemns as *jnana-karma samuchchayah dosha*.

But this problem and its solution for me lay in the future. My immediate problem of getting to India was primary: I wanted to participate in the Independence movement. Here providence was kind in finding me a sympathetic lady who became to me a second mother. We shared our ideals and so we both arrived at Bombay in April 1930 at the height of the salt *satyagraha* campaign. I was on the black books of the authorities who searched my luggage for hours, and in the years that followed there were always two CIDs on my tail. But I was overjoyed to be in India, and although the summer heat was over-

powering, it was fully compensated for by the riotous colour of flamboyants—pink cassias and the brilliant red of of the gulmohurs.

As this is not going to be a short history of the last forty years, nor an autobiography, I will skip my adventures with the Congress, and my meeting with so many famous Indians, many of them gone and others still alive. I want to hurry on to the real India that I have come to understand, far away from all immediate politics and passing events.

India as a State of Mind

Many great lovers of India have never visited this land—great Sanskrit scholars like Max Muller, poets like Goethe, philosophers like Emerson and Schopenhauer. I would boldly say that some of them seemed to know more about India, the spirit of the land, with their insight and adoption, than many Indians that I meet today seem to do. How many today can wholeheartedly agree with the verdict of Max Muller who wrote :

“ If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant—I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we, here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans and on the Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in

fact, more truly human, a life, not for this life only, but a tarnsfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India.”

I agree with this view. In its enternal perennial aspect, India is not a geographical region in space. It is a state of mind. Pilgrims in search of truth, in search of the answer to such questions as the nature of man, why we are what we are, problems psychological and cosmological, problems of ontology—the nature of being—of epistemo-logy—the inquiry into knowledge itself—and problems of axiology—the question of values in life—and above all, the way to wisdom of a final kind—these pilgrims in their quest have always turned to India. Serious students young and old, have looked to India for at least three thousand years. It is not only the people of Europe. The wisest of men have journeyed to India, or have searched for the wisdom of India, from all parts of the world, from China and Japan as well as from Greece and Rome, especially during the Buddhist epoch from the time of the Buddha to that of Harsha, when Hiuen Tsang of China came as a pilgrim, a period of over one thousand years.

Do you know what the Romans used to say in referring to India? *Ex oriente lux ; ex occidente lex*. Out of the East, Light, out of the West, Laws. And from the time of the ancient world of Greece and Rome, this state of mind that is India has persisted. The ancient peoples brought their corn and wine, their fair women and yellow gold, and bartered them for jewels and spices, fine muslins and other luxuries. But there were always the higher exchanges. Indians went to Alexandria and taught philosophy, and philosophers like Pythagoras came to India. Modern Indian

astrology since the time of Varaha Mihira at least, is a blend of Greek and indigenous learning. And we know that the zero and the place value of numerals also originated in India. And some say that Buddhist *vaidyars* from the West Coast, who were known as *thera* or elders, gave the name which we find in Greek to mean a healer or physician and which we find in the word therapeutics.

May be I am telling you a lot of things you know already. What, then, is this state of mind, this mental climate which is conjured up at least overseas when the name India is spoken in the world? It is the aspect of the wonderful, the awe-inspiring, the *ascharya* that you find in the fourth *Khanda* of the *Kena Upanishad* as well as in the *Gita* (ii. 2), where it refers to the Absolute and to absolutist teaching :

“ As wonder one person This (Absolute) sees ;
And also as Wonder another one speaks ;
Of this as a Wonder another one hears ;
Yet even through hearing none knows This at all !”

This transporting *bhava* or mood or state of mind is the same as what Rudolf Otto described many years ago in his book *Das Heilige* as the numinous. It is the transcendental mood, the sense of the contemplative, of that deep realm of understanding which needs nothing of the external world. And that, to me is why India both as a land and as an evocative image, has lived on, no matter under what external conditions she has endured, slavery or freedom in the outside sense.

And there is truth here, for all the ancient civilizations have toppled and only their ruins exist, but somehow India

persists. The secret here to my mind lies in Indian Ideals, to which I will come later.

Where the Ideal Meets the Actual

And in case you think this is a poet's dream, I must quickly say that this is not just a fancy. The ideal touches the actual in India. Let me take two examples—religious toleration and non-killing for food or vegetarianism. And although both can be exaggerated, they are nevertheless of rare value in the world and represent something almost uniquely Indian and due to her noblest sons having “plunged in thought” as Arnold wrote.

And these things make India actually a holy land—where all religious faiths are respected and where animals can live without being killed out, hunted and poisoned. You know in Europe and in parts of U.S.A. today, you never hear a bird and hardly see a rabbit or a squirrel, and the butterflies have gone, all ruthlessly exterminated. It is a fact as I can witness. All life is hunted out for the sake of utilitarian needs. And anyone knows who has travelled abroad, how the stench of meats everywhere makes one sick after the comparative lack of such sights and smells in India.

India, and down South especially, is the *only* place in the entire world, where you find millions of people who do not kill to eat, not only by tradition, but also by choice. It is not only Buddhists and Jainas and Brahmins. The *Tirukkural* praises non-killing and says in a memorable verse that the whole of nature worships with folded hands he who does not kill to eat. It is not just mere tradition. There is a true reverence for life. I do not here want to

enter into the philosophy of the attitude but only to say it is a philosophic concept due to the state of mind which is India.

But perhaps for mankind in general the greatest lesson that India's state mind has brought down to actuality, is the lesson of tolerance for all faiths. This is a rare spectacle in the world, even today where not only faiths clash but ideologies. As the Constitution of UNESCO states: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."

Of these defences of peace I would say that one of the greatest is this toleration of all faiths, all beliefs, all ideologies. India means this to me also.

When I think of Western countries in this respect, I am ashamed. What a terrible, blood-thirsty tradition there is in Europe and in the Middle East too, of religious wars of murders and every crime in the calendar, in the name of God and religion! It is a frightening thing to study their history, their inquisitions, witchburnings, their contradiction called Holy Wars, of calling people names if you do not share their beliefs, heathens and infidels, and, in this day, it continues. It is a dreadful legacy of intolerance. One turns away from it in disgust.

I am sorry to say I find political leaders today, people who should know better, taking the credit for toleration in India on the Indian Constitution which makes India a secular state. Surely it is not because India is a secular state that there is toleration of all faiths here; Indians have always been tolerant. Not because they were secular, but because they were truly non-secular, truly *spiritual*.

For an intolerant person cannot be called spiritual. But Europe and the Middle East and Pakistan need to be secularized, need secular legislation in order to protect those who hold faiths other than the fanatical major ones.

In India it is wonderful to enter Indian homes and to see in many a household shrine, full respect given to all the great religious figures, and not only Hindu idols, but the figures of Jesus as well, and a text from Islam. One does not find this generosity of spirit in Christian and Islamic countries. Here temple and mosque and church are often side by side and there is complete liberality and non-interference. The Holy Office would never tolerate a Siva temple or a shrine to Krishna or Hanuman within the Vatican City or even in Rome. And that is the test, and that is the glory of India that this people have achieved this great defence of peace. And instead of weakening their sense of religion, it is strengthened and becomes a philosophic way of life.

India means to me this wonderful forbearing spirit which breathes a principle which is universal. This appeals immediately to all the intelligent people of other lands. Don't listen to the politicians of Europe or America. They are like politicians everywhere, without any depth. They are too engrossed in the affairs of the market place and the world of intrigue and diplomacy to have leisure to consider the lasting virtues and verities which form the state of mind or the soul of a people. Even Nehru confessed that he was a man of action and had no patience with religion, and in his *Discovery of India* wrote of his inability to enter into the mental climate of the *Upanishads*. Fortunately

India still has leaders who can.

Let me quote here what Arnold Toynbee, the most famous historian of the century, has said about Indian religious tolerance: "The Indian religions," he said, "are not exclusively-minded. They are ready to allow that there may be alternative approaches to the mystery. I feel sure that in this they are right, and that this catholic-minded Indian religions spirit is the way of salvation for human beings of all religious in an age in which we have to learn to live as a single family if we are not to destroy ourselves."

India as a place and India as a state of mind cannot be really separated. So many factors are involved here—the languages of India themselves are charged with philosophic content, with analogies and references to religion and mythology drawn from different sources and traditions, but all gathered together, to give emphasis to universal principles. The languages of Europe deal with action, with commerce, with buying and selling, and they are charged with the phrases and metaphors and similes of one religion, the Christian. Indian thinking turns to contemplation, while European thinking turns to action. These are two worlds of the mind, Nehru's mental world of action on the one hand and the contemplative world of say, a Ramana Maharshi or a Narayana Guru on the other hand. And whichever we may think the best, it is the latter which remains India the world of the yogi and the ashram, the world of idols and ecstasy, and wonder.

India as a Land, Actually

But to discover that India one must leave the world of

banks and stock exchanges, the world of the factory, the talkies, the sports-field, and the world of politics and parliament, all of which stifle the sense of the numinous and the wonderful. These to me do not represent India. They represent another mode of thought which is entirely Western, the Roman *lex* as contra the Indian *lex*, rules rather than *freedom*, laws rather than wisdom or light.

And perhaps the reason for much of the muddle in Indian life that we see around us today is the result of the conflict between these two dialectically opposite *darshanas*. Take the Indian attitude towards a bit of machinery, a car for example. He treats it as it is, a vehicle for carrying him from one place to another. But, to an American, a car is almost more important than anything else. It is the little metal-god almost greater and better loved than his wife and children. He spends most of his spare time in his car, and he cares for it. He need never leave his car, whether for eating, or for doing business, or for entertainment—all these things come to him in the car-god. There are drive-in cinemas, banks, restaurants and so on—everything comes to him in the car, which he does not need to leave. And so, he worships this bit of ironmongery. Contrast this with the Indian who treats his car as the senseless cleverly made gadget that it really is. If he grinds its gears he knows it is not sensate, so why bother? And it is the same with everything else belonging to the world of mere things.

Of course the *intelligence* behind them is respected. The blueprint and not the actualization is what matters, whether it is a five years plan, or a timepiece. The two attitudes, the two approaches, to the same thing are thus,

to me, quite distinct and almost in opposition. And perhaps in the future, when a more yogic attitude superimposes itself upon both, this dialectical conflict may be resolved. Then we shall see, perhaps, that both the intelligence and the end result in actuality, the plan and its achievement, will be given proper treatment, without exaggerations on either side.

I shall return to the spiritual aspect later. But even when one thinks of India as a land and not as a concept or state of mind, and cannot escape the spiritual. A peculiar absoluteness broods over India as a land. Here are the world's highest mountains, and some of the world's greatest jungles, and the land of the lotus and the elephant, great rivers and hot plains, the home of the banyan tree and above all, such a plentitude of humans, people so plentiful and so varied in manners and customs that descriptive writers have been at a loss to describe India. And even in sheer numbers have you ever considered that India has more people than in the whole of Europe, excluding Russia? And twice as many inhabitants as in the whole of North America, or in the whole of Africa?

Those of us who have seen other lands, and can make actual comparisons, are perhaps best informed to understand the glories of India physically. The variety of India stands out against the uniform dress and customs in the so-called civilized world. There they speak of freedom, but in India in manners and customs there is actual freedom. Individuality here is able to express itself. Sannyasins have worn their hair matted and uncut long before Beatie or beehive hair-dos were thought of. Here nobody cares; and you can wear any sort of dress you like, or undress, or even no

dress, like the Digambara Jains. You realize this freedom of dear old chaotic or untidy India as soon as you return from abroad and the returning resident breathes a great sigh of relief that at last he doesn't need to conform to the square standards of the well-ruled and well-regulated and well-ordered and dragooned populations of other societies.

And yet for all its infinite variety, India is a sustained unity, held together by the sense of the sacred and the Paganism and Pantheism everywhere in evidence. Europe and Egypt have no longer any Pagan temples. There are only the ruins of the Parthenon in Athens, or at Karnac in Egypt. And China, an equally ancient civilization, has had her ancient way of life destroyed. as Chinese have destroyed the way of life of the Tibetans. Only India remains to represent a high Pagan way of life which has this sacredness of mountain and forest, river and lake, with millions, young and old, going to the same shrines and temples as their ancestors did when Greece and Egypt at the height of their glory. And there are those in the world today who would destroy all this. These same mountains and rivers and forests enshrine the memory of the Indian people. They have been sung by Kalidasa and hosts of others, and praised in hoary books like the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Ramayana* and the *Maha-Bharata*, by great sages like Vyasa and Sankara and Valmiki. These memories are all part and parcel of the Indian scene, and are still there in the hearts of the pilgrims whose feet tread the same worn stones that were trodden by their ancestors for a hundred generations before.

I have seen beautiful places in the world of breath-

taking loveliness, such as coastal California, Malaya's huge jungles, the Alpine scenery of Europe, the Riviera, and so on. The one thing lacking in them all, however, is this identity of man and place in terms of reverence.

To me there is something outrageous as well as comical to see Europeans dressed missionaries, most of whom could be easily defeated in philosophical argument by any unlettered Indian villager, coming over to India to teach Indians how to be religious! Why, Indians have more of the spirit of Jesus and Muhammed than the whole of Europe and the Middle East put together! The very atmosphere and the language of the Bible is a familiar idiom to the Indian. When one reads for instance, in the Christian text "take-up thy bed and walk" what meaning can this have for the European or American whose bed is a four-poster of brass or wood? And Jesus going to the well and chatting with the villagers---nobody in the so-called Christian countries goes to a well these days of piped water. It is therefore, the missionaries who need to learn their own religion at the feet of the people of India. And indeed, I believe many do learn, for Christianity and Islam in India become far more tolerant religions than they have ever been elsewhere. And religion is not a mere Friday or a Sunday habit. Missionaries are really carrying coals to Newcastle, or as you might say, bringing sandalwood to Mysore.

The Indian South

Beautiful as the Himalayan lands are and the great Gangetic plains, or the land of the five rivers or Gujarat and Bengal, it is the South which appeals to me as being

the most representative of India. There is wonderful scenery in Sikkim, and I visited the now notorious Nathu La at an elevation of 15,000 feet, three miles high, over thirty years ago, when there was no thought then of Chinese invasions—my interest then in Botany, in the great hanging forests and above them the flowery Alpine meadows and the grasses fragrant with herbs which all the old Indian writers have praised. And I have enjoyed too, visiting the flat marsh-lands of Gujarat, not knowing then that it might be the scene of battles, but to enjoy the birdlife, birds of all kinds in flocks of hundreds and thousands, real wild paradise for life. And this is one of the many features of India which is worth remembering and which is so noticeable, the fearlessness, especially of birds. I have already mentioned the reasons for this. It is always a memorable experience and is part of what India means to me. People today talk of killing monkeys. In this land of Hanuman or Anjaneya I wonder who is going to do this, and I also wonder what sort of protests there are going to be! I feel sure this will remain at the blueprint stage, and I suspect the instigation for this monkey-killing came from foreign sources.

As I was saying, it is the South which is the real India to me. In her *Pageant of Indian History*, Gertrude Emerson Sen has two chapters, one entitled *Foreign North* and the other *Indian South*, and these phrases very neatly sum up my general approach. For North India has always been exposed to invasion from the time of the plundering Aryan hordes onwards. There is a tension and a restlessness endemic to North India, a perpetual uncertainty about who is coming next to invade.

In olden times South India was sheltered by the natural barriers of the immense Dandakaranya forest mentioned in the *Ramayana*, hundreds of miles of almost impenetrable jungle and, in later historical times, by the great Mahratha people who kept out the northern invaders, perhaps also assisted by the warrior bands of the Andhras. So the South became a place of refuge, particularly to scholars and spiritual teachers, and so learning flourished in centres such as Kanchi and Madurai, while trade went on with peoples overseas on both coasts, from the East to China, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaya and Indonesia, and on the West to Africa, Arabia, and Europe.

The Pre-Aryan Origins of Yoga

Here I must refer to a most important factor in relation to South India; the concept of Yoga, with which India is forever associated. Yoga is indigenous to India. It was here long before the coming of the Aryans. Chance brought me to Karachi in 1962, when I returned to India on a cargo vessel. There I had the opportunity of visiting the famous museum for which Sir Mortimer Wheeler the archaeologist was largely responsible. The main collection there is from Mohenjodaro and Harappa, cities belonging to what is known as the Indus Valley Civilization. It was fascinating and important to the understanding of India, because I was clearly seeing visible evidence of the existence of the yogi and of the early Siva worship long before the arrival of the Aryans. Not only that, I saw also the prototype of South Indian life, of proto-Dravidian culture. The plan of the cities and of the houses corresponds exactly with those in South India, the houses

with their inner porticos and courtyard and the temples with the bathing pool, very stupidly called "the great bath" by archaeologists who see things through the European angle rather than from the Oriental. As for the evidence of early Siva worship, it is self-evident, with Siva *lingams* and the many carvings of Nandi, the bull, and then the sacred fig tree, and as for yoga, there is the famous seal and many others, showing Pasupati Siva.

This clearly proves that yoga and that contemplative and ecstatic type of religion, which is quite apart from the worship of the Vedic sky gods, belonged to this indigenous Indian people who have so many affinities with the Dravidian that for all intents and purposes they can be considered one and the same. Only Aryan zealots would evade this conclusion. All the evidence shows that the invading Aryans swooped down from the North and destroyed the cities, and even the date is known, by the use of radio-carbon 14, as around 1500 B. C. And if you read what the late Father Heras has written on the decipherment of the Indus Valley script found on the soapstone seals, you will be inclined to accept that the language also was of Dravidian origin, while archaeologists like Piggott and Wheeler give plenty of supporting evidence from other sources which suggest the same conclusion. The Aryans had never been city dwellers, but they won a victory every where—not only in India, but in Iran and Syria and in Greece—because they had tamed the horse and invented the fast horse-drawn chariot. All this of course is a long time ago, but the importance of this confrontation lies in the fact that while Aryans could impose their politics, and introduce caste and be severe as in the *Manu Smriti*, they, in turn, through

the Dravidian kings (now called *kshattriyas*) learnt something of the wisdom of India, and also the notion of contemplation and yoga, from hermits and thinkers and the Gurus who lived in the forests, surrounded by the animals, as we know from these Mohenjodaro seals. Instead of the often asserted claim that Indian wisdom was brought to India by the Aryans, I am inclined to believe the opposite to be true and that the inoffensive conquered indigenous Indians, disliked because of their dark skins, tamed and taught these warrior bands of meat-eating Aryans, and introduced them to philosophy and to a superior set of spiritual values, hence the growth of the *sruti* literature which invariably revalues and often even condemns the Vedas upon which it stands. At any rate the notion of the contemplative yogi figure remains, and South India's way of life remains, as alive today as it was when the *Yavanas* or Ionian Greeks and so many other long-forgotten traders and visitors came to these shores. It is all part of the wonder that is the India that I discovered.

And now I begin to touch on what really interests me most in India, and the central theme of this essay. We leave the politics and the adventure of history with their everlasting problems and enter the domain of the Eternal. That aspect of the Absolute known as Nature has made conditions in India favourable for the quest of the spirit. This is particularly true of South India which has been sheltered from the violence and turbulence of the North.

You must all be aware of a very strange fact—that South India hardly ever comes into what is called world news. How is it that about one hundred million people,

about twice the population of England, do not make what is called news and never appear in the headlines? News, of course, means political excitement and disturbances. Peace and contentment are not news. Now the only event in South India in recent years which was thought to be of news-importance was the language flare-up, a typically South Indian reaction connected with something quite intangible and invisible. This only shows that the South Indians, and those Indians who think like them in this respect, while indifferent on the whole to external affairs, are not indifferent to internal matters, to issues that are vital to the soul. To interfere with language is to meddle with spiritual high-explosives. I think that lesson has been well and truly learned by language changers.

Idolatry and Paganism

Language is as good a point as any other, to begin any discussion on spirituality, for India has evolved its own philosophical languages. I am here referring mainly to the unique specialized language of the idol, the sacred image. These are all absolutist images, which thousands of years ago arose full-fledged out of the matrix of the Absolute in the consciousness of highly gifted contemplatives. And while those whose vision is limited to the lower ranges of life, to the relative rationalizing mind, and even to those religion remains at that systematic and fiat level, whether they are atheistic moderns or whether they are missionaries for some religions or ideology at that level, while they will always fail to understand idols and condemn at once all idols, because they have shut themselves off wilfully, or have been sealed off by their conditioning from the deepest

intuitional insights, it is not so with the great masses of the common people, who easily recognise this stone and wood language of spirit. They are never at a loss to get the eternal message of the grand symbols.

That yogi image of the contemplative figure seated crosslegged beneath a tree which is first seen in Pre-Aryan India, has now spread far and wide across the continents and the oceans. Its appeal is universal. It conveys in principle what whole volumes of philosophy are sometimes needed to say. Once, when I was footsore and weary with the hooting rushing din of the streets of Paris, I found my way to the Musee Guimet, that famous centre of oriental art. It so happened that I was the only visitor, and after I had bought my ticket from the sleepy caretaker, I wandered round and finally collapsed on a seat in one of the galleries. This large room had a magnificent collection of beautiful carvings and figures from Cambodia. Cambodia is called after Kambu who was a Siva *bhakta* and yogi who found himself in this Far Eastern land, and taught the Naga people there the wisdom of South India. In the last century or so, over six hundred temples have been found there, the most famous being at Angkor. The French archaeologists brought some of the Siva statues to Paris, and so there I was, tired and far away physically from India, but at last in a room full of these tranquil images. I had found a seat in front of one of them with its enigmatic smile, and as I gazed at this contemplative figure, I sloughed off my weariness as a snake discards its old skin. It was a transporting experience, without any need for Aldous Huxley's drugs peyotl or lysergic acid.

I am sure many people who have never been to India

find such figures equally effective in inducing the contemplative state of mind which banishes mental fatigue. I know of many Western friends who keep such images, usually of the Buddha. These idols bring peace and the numinous mood—that Indian state of mind—which liberates them, temporarily at least, from the world of laws and rules and noise and frantic haste, and brings them into the calm transparent world of freedom and peace. The ultimate truth, the Absolute or the Atman, is beyond all names, concepts and argument, and is expressed by the silent language of symbol, as Sankara knew when he composed his *Dakshinamurti Stotra*, the Southward Facing From or Guru.

We can imagine man to have a dynamic pole outside and a still centre within. In India the image of the wheel is used to indicate this. Too much activity at the rim disturbs the mind and it is only when one settles down in the centre that relief is found, where one is beyond the mental activities of speech and thought, as the *Kena Upanishad* explains. And then the intuitive or *turiya* of the *Mandukya Upanishad* is found.

It is because of these images, idols and symbols that I hold India to be of the greatest importance in the world today. Because it is through these images which belong to the *turiya* or true state, that truth can be found. It is wonderful to discover a land where these images are still flourishing openly and unashamed. The missionaries will condemn the idols. That is because they fear them. Don't listen to these missionaries. They have driven out or submerged the primordial wisdom images from Pagan Europe, and that is a tragic misfortune and the European is to be pitied thereby. The Western world has been cowed by

Church bishops, priests and theologians into abandoning the images in favour of intellectual concepts, creeds and systems. Everything has been intellectualized, conceptualized, from sex to food. People eat vitamin pills and are carried away by the concept that they are getting the equivalent of good fruits and vegetables. It is all a mess. The direct contacts with life at both poles of here-and-nowness in the form of real humans, real food at both one end, and of direct intuitive awareness at the other, have been lost, a double tragedy. And it is all due to the Church and the state and science which are entirely intellectual. So the Western peoples are suffering, and they don't know what's wrong with them. They are really starved of the pre-primordial images, and they need real numinous idols. And so there is revolt in the psyche and it bursts out into the violence of wars. And they have nightmares and dreadful dreams because deep down the Aryan or Absolute which is never absent, insists on being noticed somehow. So it sends forth its impulses and these take on the form of strange dreams which the psychologists like the late Prof. Carl Jung have recognized to be of a universal nature, calling it the Collective Unconscious. Jung in private life as we know from his autobiography, was less compromising and more forthright in his assertions, and this unconditioned so-called Unconscious was clearly the same as the *Chit* aspect of the Absolute as known to Indian philosophical investigation.

We can take it, then, that beneath the crust of Christianized conditioning, the European is just as idolatrous and just as rich in idols or images of a numinous character, as any Indian. These images are among the most precious

part of life. Not only are they perfectly valid, but they are even more necessary, because they are closer to the self of man than speeches and writings, systems and doctrines can ever be.

Understanding Indian Religion

As my friends know, I am the disciple of a Guru. I would like therefore, to refer to Guruhood and to its role in understanding Indian religion, because this to me is very precious, indeed perhaps the most precious thing that comes to me when I ask what India means to me.

Indian religion is not an organised affair, with a common establishment centred in a Mecca or a Vatican. Indian religion is unified by other means of religious expression which collectively are known as Hinduism, there is always the spiritual preceptor, the Guru. Wherever one goes, one discovers the existence of long hierarchies of spiritual teachers or *Paramparya*, long lists of Gurus and their disciples, down through the ages, I need not go into their names. You will find these spiritual dynasties listed in the *Upanishads*. And even in the heterodox religions of India this is so. The emergent figure is always that of the teacher surrounded by his band of disciples. The Buddha was a teacher with disciples, and so was Jesus. And Muhammed had his disciples who carried on the spiritual tradition. The word *Sika* really means *sisya* in punjabi. And so on. *paramparya* of Jesus goes back to Moses and the Jewish prophets or disciples. It is this principle of Guruhood and wisdom that can be taught only by this method which unites all kinds of approaches of truth, all religious manifestations. The great error of Western religion and of Islam was to

have permitted opportunists to capitalize on this tradition and convert a spiritual organic *method* into a political *organization*. Then everything gets mixed up, and even Buddhists resort to politics and war.

India means to me the land of the Guru above all else. You must know that invocation :

Guru-brahma, Guru-vishnuh, Guru-devo Mahesvarah.

Guru saksht parabrahma, tasmai Sri Gurave namah !

Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is God, the Great Lord (Siva). The Guru is the visible absolute, my Prostrations to the blessed Guru !

A WARRIOR RISHI

The Life and Teaching of Narayana Guru (1855-1928)

Every year in September the birthday anniversary of Narayana Guru, spritual leader of Malabar, is celebrated throughout South India, Ceylon and wherever there are Malayalees. The occasion is recognised by the Government of Madras who have made it an official holiday. There are splendid solemn rejoicings, processions often with elephants, and all the many marks of devotion and reverence given in the traditional style of Southern Asia to a hero of the spirit.

During 1955 the celebrations have been on a scale exceeding former ones, that year being the centennial of Narayana Guru's birthday.

Hitherto, it has been an occasion of special significance Malayalees, since it was mainly with them that Narayana Guru lived. Although they are prominent in the manifestations of respect and homage to his memory, this does not mean to suggest that his life-work or his teaching was limited in any way to any particular community or country. That the people of Malabar should have had the first honour of remembering this great Guru, is due chiefly to the fact the spiritual and social degeneracy of the West Coast region of India provided the Guru with an immediate occasion to show what could be done with what seemed the most impossible of insoluble problems. So it was that through his advice much of the social and caste disabilities were swept away and many absurdities of a communal character removed.

But although his immediate *Swadharma* ('naturally

right activity”) quite naturally began, so to say, “at home”, his life and teachings were universal, lifted clear out of the sultry atmosphere of locality and communalism. It would be a gross injustice to associate him (which has often been done by the misinformed of his followers) with special community to which because of his parental stock, he is thought to “belong.” Such association of Guru with geographical and historical background while natural enough, betrays a lack of acquaintance with both the understanding of the Guru figure in general, and with the philosophy which was the crowning glory of the Guru Narayana. His fame rests upon immensely higher principles than those at the merely socialized level. Like all true men of the spirit, he stands out as a universalist, an absolutist in the free world of humanity. In every respect his teaching and his brilliant example were for all mankind.

What follows is just a brief introduction to the life and philosophy of this warrior *Rishi*. It indicates why he has the everlasting affection of all who crossed his path, of the thousands who felt his gracious touch, and of the two million followers who today revere him. Those who look for a more serious study may turn to impressive and fully documented account given in *The Word of the Guru* by his foremost disciple, Dr. P. Natarajan.*

* “The Word of the Guru” by Dr. P. Natarajan (with a Foreword John Spiers) is a full-dress biography of Narayana Guru, written in the light of the Guru’s philosophy, with 100 pages dealing with comments on translations of the writings of the Guru. Fully indexed, cloth bound with coloured art wrapper, 17 illustrations, crown 8-vo, xxii plus 442-pages Rs. 12-50 (postal charges Rs. 1-50 extra) from Gurukula Publishing House, Kaggalipura P.O., Bangalore District, South India.

The Background of Guruhood

To begin with, it is essential to understand the background, the mental climate, the social and traditional matrix into which Guru's life was first poured.

It is well known that in India, and particularly in South India, climate and geography have encouraged and developed certain precious human characteristics which elsewhere rarely get an opportunity for expression. It is a natural cradle-land for humanity. Nature herself calms down or makes it unnecessary, to display the violent external urges which elsewhere drive humanity into forceful action. There is instead, quieting down of outer activity, and a turning of the consciousness within. Normally, this produces a dream like attitude to life, coexistent with an appreciation of all things as imbued with similar unsubstantiality. On the one hand, this has the advantage of dissolving any tendency towards systematic dogmatism and on the other hand it leads towards a numinous attitude to stones and trees (the philosophy of hylozoism or of the mystery and sanctity of all life) and the building-up within, of inner worlds heavens filled with idealizations having various values high or low (hypostatization). Both have had their dangers in the social sense, since they lead to easy exploitation by priests.

Such favoured conditions for introversion would seem to have existed here almost forever, and the Siva contemplative yogi figure found in the pre-Aryan ruins of Mohenjodaro suggests the antiquity of contemplation. Thus uninterrupted historically, a tradition, a technique, and a mighty exploration of the mystery of existence leading to the final emancipation of man, has gone on in this most suitable environment. Here, the mighty problems of exis-

tence and reality have been often formulated and sometimes solved.

The dangers of an inward-turned life are clearly those of indifference to externals, a neglect of the phenomenal waking life. Not only contemplative individuals, but contemplation itself has been overcovered by aggressive forces. What should have remained spiritual has been socialized. Priestcraft has flourished in varied and cruel forms such as "caste" and "untouchability."

But there have always been revolutionaries, wide awake introverts, wise spiritual reformers, who have come in the nick of time it has seemed, to rescue their depressed, lethargic brothers and sisters from the tyrannical excesses of a hierararchical society. Of these saviours of humanity the greatest in recent years has been Narayana Guru.

Also in the background it is proper to refer here to Guruhood itself. India still remains the land where the life dedicated to wisdom or holiness is recognised as "normal" at least for the few bold enough to attempt it. Even this of course can degenerate and there are innumerable imposters. But there is a traditon of Guruhood, along with a strict discipline, qualifications and method and culminating in what is know as the Science of the Absolute (*Brahma Vidya*).

Happiness which lasts is end of all philosophic seeking. unhappiness, say the sages, arises where suffering is due to the presence of unreconciled duality, an apparent duality arising from the world as it seems to be presented pheno-meanally. Thus, the Science of the Absolute in India is also turned Non-Dualism or Advaita. It is mentioned here in some detail because it was in presenting a revalued

Advaita that the Guru Narayana's ministry consisted. Therefore, Advaita has to be understood for a proper appraisal of the Guru, however difficult it may be to express it in the non-philosophic terminology of alien English. It is not "Monism," which is an enclosed system. Non-dualism begins where systematization ends. It is the completion of all systems, giving place to each and surmounting all in realizable certainty as a supremely final value, or as Self-happiness.

Early Life and Self-certainty

It was in this setting that the Guru-to-be was born in a village known as Chempazhandy, about ten miles north of Trivandrum, the capital of what is now the State of Travancore-Cochin, in the year 1855.

His father was Madan Asan, a good farmer but also noted as a teacher well versed in astronomy and in the Indian system of medicine known as Ayurveda and a Sanskrit scholar. Like his father, the boy Narayana (called affectionately Nanu) was early known as a brilliant scholar. By the time he was thirty, after the death of his parents, Narayana had excelled beyond the usual studies in Sanskrit literature, and was delving into the Advaita textbooks, such as the *Upanishads*, the *Brahma-Sutras* and the *Bhagavad Gita* with the vast commentaries (*Bhashya*) of Shankara.

Added to this life of pure scholarship was also the call to the life of contemplation, and the Guru retired quietly to the lonely but beautiful mountain region at that tapering end of the Indian continent known as Cape Comorin. Not much is known about these formative years except that

he studied Yoga with experts and at length found the answer to his searching.

He first attracted attention as a wandering *Sannyasin* sometime in his thirties, near, the village of Neyyatinkara, where the simple peasants in accordance with South Indian tradition, accepted him almost instinctively and gave him protection.

As he has recorded in poetry of great beauty, he passed through whole ranges of mystical travail, when the mind is flooded with visions. But his keen hold on himself never relaxed and he was never submerged by transcendental imagery. He was an athlete of the spirit. These subtler aspects of duality, the last traces of the power called *Maya* or the illusory negating force of nature, did not trap him in his relentless pursuit of Reality. But, like many other mystical poets, he used these images which belonged to the soil and the soul of South India to express emergent values of universal good to all. Thus, did certainty come to him, unaffected thereafter by time, or place, thought or fancy. He remained in peace and joy.

While the devoted villagers attended to his simple needs he returned their service by kindly advice. The remainder of his life was thenceforth that of a Guru. "Remover of Darkness," as the name connotes. With the Guru, Self-enlightenment was always given primacy over action. His goodness was not based on impulsive generosity or personal attachment either to group or to nation. His secret lay in preserving the neutrality of wisdom from which all things flow rightly. Action purely done both extolled the knowing Self within as well as benefitted the same Self of others. This he summed up as follows :

“ Acts that one performs
For one’s own sake,
Should also aim the good
of other men.”

The Practical Yogi

Throughout the remainder of his life the Guru was distinguished by a directness, correctness and brevity in applying the open secret of unitive understanding which is Advaita. All was of the nature of the non-dual Self, yet polarized in terms of consciousness into the Absolute and the relative. In his own words :

“ Beyond all count is One-
Then the common reality here
Then these two besides—no form
Can there be, neither in memory,
Sleep, in that city on high,
Nor anywhere else, indeed !”

The majority of saintly figures in India, and even elsewhere are often content to be passively perfect, resting purely in holiness. But positive holiness is rare, a holiness which saves others from feeling inferior, or “unholy” or “bound” in any way. Narayana Guru in 1916, composed “A Garland of Visions of Truth” in Sanskrit (*Darshana Mala*) in which he critically valued the various types of mystics.

He remained completely active and yet still at heart, filled with pure intelligence always. He would rise before others as an example to the lethargic, and he would often be the last to retire, seeing to neglected items of work

unfinished by his followers. He was tireless and yet poised. He insisted on intelligence even in little things like the sharpness of a razor when being shaved. Few have been so eloquent in adoration of the Supreme (*Bhakti*) and done so forthright in pointing out how often mere sentiment or uninformed adoration led to excess and absurdities. He would not brook unreason, least of all in the name of religion.

So too, the world was his country. Freedom in the total global sense alone could represent the truth in social terms. Nationalism was just communalism broadened into larger and usually more fearful dimensions. It was caste in the narrow sense even as in the local sense people split themselves into warring groups. He took the word *Jati* (the English word "caste") and in five verses showed how it should mean the whole human "family" or "species."

He could not and did not divide humanity in any way, neither into caste groups in the ordinary sense, nor into the West Coast tribal groups (e.g. Tiyas, Eravas, Nairs, Nambudries, etc.) nor into national groups (he approved of marriage between Eastern and Western followers), nor into religious folds (he moved with Christians and Jews who were often harshly criticized by his "Hindu" associates), nor into rich and poor.

Again and again, in various ways, he proved the unitive Reality within the field of diversity. There was always in all conscious beings the common Self, or "I", affirming its reality, behind names and distinctions. As Socrates showed in the Platonic discourses, the aim was always "to see all in terms of the Universal." This saved man from confusion. To achieve this, disciplined detachment had

to become a permanent habit. Then with the Guru Narayana all could say :

“What name? caste? trade? age?

From questions such, when one is free

He gains release.

I or thou, this and that, inside or out, or
none at all ;

From cogitations such, when one is free

He gains release.”

This balanced Rishi-state, active and yet detached, is the *Karma-akarma* (action-freed action) of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Just as Shankara over a thousand years earlier, and from Malabar also, had used the very grammar and logic of Pundits in order to crack all fixedness of wordiness, so too Narayana Guru who declared himself to be reformulating the essence of Shankara, used science and society in order to crack them open and let in the fresh air of the universal. Narayana Guru indeed, if bare justice is to be done, easily earns the title of the Shankara of the twentieth century.

A Vedantin Warrior

There was nothing esoteric or aloof about the Guru. He was public always, and identified himself with one and all. His wide knowledge of Sanskrit and Tamil besides Malayalam enabled him on the one hand to initiate a renaissance of these languages, especially Malayalam, and on the other hand, to meet the orthodox on their own ground when they raised objections to some of his sweeping suggestions.

He did not found a new religion. At the request of a group of people he would suggest better ways of worship.

All religions represented to him the same quest for happiness and he never opposed any, and had a sincere equal reverence for all their founders.

He taught his followers how to unite without hatred of others, but he took no sides, moving equally with all. Organizations arose in his name, some of them indeed because of inevitable political factors and a curious lack of comprehension of his principles, making the very mistakes of separateness against which he strove relentlessly in his lifetime, the inevitable mistakes of undue haste and heedlessness which have ever pained the world's great teachers.

Thus, the Guru lived strenuously, trying by every means to bring the Advaita principle down from the intellectual heights to the plain thatched homes amid the ricefields of the simple peasants and villagers. He was wilful on purpose in all this, and would often upset scheduled programmes for mass-meetings in order to comfort some individual whom his compassionate eyes felt needed the human Guru word. He had total sympathy always with those whom he felt to be excluded whether of high or low social status, whether of one faith or the other.

He condemned as wasteful many long-established customs and rituals. He simplified wherever possible, marriage and other customs. He would refuse to eat where distinctions or cruelty or some dirt was present. He saw no reason why people should not eat in common. Even in the teeth of general opposition he would firmly maintain his stand in the name of reasonableness and truth. It was mainly by the unanswerable logic of his dedicated action that he won the heads as well as the hearts of the innumerable masses of common people throughout Malabar. He gave

them a forward vision on unitive grounds and today largely due to his inspiration there remains only a relic of the ancient cruel customs which dominated the scene at the time the Guru began his ministry.

Accounts of his physical appearance unanimously stress the regal aspect of his presence. He was a tall man with extremely sensitive features, and of a peculiar brightness of complexion. He responded instantly to suffering with deep compassion, and yet, when the occasion demanded it, was equally capable of protesting sharply and critically to anything cruel or unreasonable. Many found him impossible, but the magnetism of his personality brought all to his side. He had great humour as well, and his intelligence prevented him also from any kind of irrational fall into mere sentiment. Cleanliness was almost a fetish with him, especially that cleanliness which is of the mind, an intellectual honesty. He would go out of his way, and undertake extreme personal discomfort, if by doing so he could drive home his disapproval of some falsehood or action at variance with goodness and truth.

Often he would be silent, only uttering one word here and there, or may be only a gesture. From day to day throughout his life he was in the limelight, and had there been any flaws in the diamond they would have been observed. His courage and strength of character may be seen in the few photographs of him that exist, even when he was old in years. Every action was an occasion for a lesson, even in his last months of sickness. He seemed to have prodigious stores of energy. He was the Advaitin personified, and yet at the same time a man of kindly humour.

Social and Religious Revaluation

The background of the Guru has its place in understanding his attitude to worship and the quiet revolution which took place in the religious and social field wherever he went.

One of his first public acts was the opening of a temple for those who were considered beyond the pale of orthodox society. The orthodox priests protested, as was perhaps natural. The Guru was ready for them. He told them they were welcome to their Brahmin version of a Siva but that this was a Siva of the non-Brahmins. The Guru was a realist. If people wanted worship of some sort he provided the best ideals that their minds could assimilate. He transformed many existing places of animal sacrifice into kindlier centres. He took the ancient Siva religion which had its horrific aspects such as worship of the harsh Kali, and revalued this tragic version of the feminine counterpart of Siva into the gracious purer vision of Saraswathi—the same feminine principle, but manifesting beauty rather than ugliness, the arts of peace rather than war.

He was punctilious about small details connected with ceremonial. He composed special hymns for use, in both Sanskrit and Malayalam, each incorporating the prehistoric legends associated with the family of Siva. Into these compositions he infused new values, always consistent with the spirital content of Self-realization and always non-dualistic. He trained young lads in precision of behaviour to recite his compositions to such a pitch of perfection that no one could distinguish them from the priests in the temples of the orthodox. By such means he showed that what people called differences were mythical, and that

“caste” was merely a mental notion which could be superseded and forgotten. “Don’t think about caste,” he would say.

Here it must be noted that the Guru’s object was not “uplift” of a depressed class in the usual sense of the word. Self-improvement came as a natural by-product when right relations were established between man and man. He did not want merely to set right some balance between two opposing elements, both artificial, such as pariah and Brahmin. Viewed psychologically Brahmin or Pariah were character formations invading social fields where they became monstrous absurdities. Good social relations demanded a global vision of humanity—indeed the Guru’s vision ultimately extended so as to embrace in kindliness even the whole of life, and might even be said to abolish that dualism implied in the division of life into animate and inanimate. He would on occasion rebuke someone who took wilderness of nature and dared to suggest in one poem that even the old version of Siva had traces of cruelty which were reproachable.

And so many temples large and small, came into existence all along the West Coast, from Mangalore to Cape Comorin. But besides temples, which were mainly social institutions, Narayana Guru also fostered the building of quiet places for contemplative living, setting the example himself at his headquarters at Sivagiri near Varkala, an ancient temple centre some thousand years old, twenty miles north of Trivandrum in the far south. Another favourite *Ashrama* was at Alwaye, near Cochin, set in beautiful gardens by the banks of the wide Periyar River, and not every far from the traditional birth place of

Shankara. In these places he taught those who were able to understand, the profounder and more regular Advaita teachings. Most of his followers rarely understood what they considered the "religious" aspect of the Guru's way of life. But the Guru and the few who understood him, this was the precious part of his life.

For such sincere students of the Advaita he composed many works of rare wisdom, dealing with all the aspects of finalized and revalued philosophy, covering the whole field of possible views of truth, with a methodical approach to the problems of ontology, epistemology, cosmology, teleology, psychic discipline, phenomenology and the way toward final freedom and absolute certainty. In this work he was building for the future, giving a new statement for humanity in a form which was flawlessly correct. Altogether the Guru composed about forty-five works, some short, many of considerable length. He wrote at all levels of understanding, so that none might feel cut out from the presence of the living word of the perennial wisdom.

He was, like most master-philosophers, adept at the concise and brief statement of high principles. For institutions founded in his name he gave the following lines:

"Devoid of dividing walls
Of caste or race
Or hatred of rival faith,
We all live here in brotherhood.
Such, know this place to be:
This model foundation."

Radiation of Unitive Message

The Guru's message of all-embracing unity spread first

along the West Coast, thence to South India and Ceylon, and has now reached the far-off shores of Europe and America, and places like Singapore, where there are institutions dedicated in his name.

Hundreds of institutions embodying some of his principles sprang up throughout Kerala. Schools, dispensaries and Ashrams built in his name are flourishing. Then there are the temples which increase in popularity as time goes on. While he was alive, the Guru directed the humble peasants and the illiterate masses straight to the perennial fountain source of spirituality, so that the common people in many instances, became truer seekers of the wisdom of the Absolute (*Brahmavidya*), than the traditional holders of titles so that casteless, supranational heritage which has always been the glory of the Indian region of the world.

Narayana Guru encouraged students and middle-class followers to study Sanskrit as well as Western Science and English. It was not as a blind attachment either to a hoary past or to a present uncritical pursuit of "progress." It was with the sole intent of discovering the right means of using every faculty intelligently to that end, so that right relationships might be achieved in their personal and public lives, and all irrationalisms and absurdities be removed. Science and learning could be rightly used when guided by true aims. Then it need not defeat in misuse or exploitation.

His own assured realistic wisdom is apparent, not only by the methods he adopted to short circuit the dangers of priestcraft and the barren follies of meaningless custom and ritual, but by his crisp phrases and poetic sayings which went directly into the deepest consciousness of the people. They became at once self-confident, released from centuries

old fears and ecclesiastical tyrannies.

In hundreds of thousands of homes his simple words and prayers on every lip today, from childhood onwards. One of his most famous prayers of this kind is as follows:

“God protect us and keep us ever from harm!

Thou art the Great Captain,

And a mighty steamship on the ocean of being
is Thy foot.

Counting all things here,

Touching them one by one,

We come at last to where

There is no more left :

Then, lo, the quest stops

In stillness.

In thee, likewise, let the inner self

Attain its rest!

Food and clothes, and all things else we need,

Thou givest us unceasingly :

Ever saving us from want.

We thrive on Thy bounty, Lord!

Our only God Thou art.

To sea, and wave and wind and depth compared,

Let us within us see the plan, respectively

Of us ourselves, of *Maya*, Thy Power and Thou

Thyself!

Thee we find Creation :

The Creator, too, Thou didst become, and

Creation's myriad magic :

And the very Stuff of all created things.

Truth Thou art,

And Knowledge and Bliss likewise.

The present Time art thou.
Past and Future merge in unity in Thee
Even the Spoken Word—a moment's thought reveals
As but of Thine own Self again.
Victory to Thee, Great Master!
Ever-watchful Saviour,
All-knowing, bliss-filled Sea Kindness;
Hail!
In the deep, ocean of Thy Glory
Let us all together immersed be—
For ever and for ever—
There to dwell, everlastingly—
In bliss—Aum."

Towards Universal Peace and Happiness

While Narayana Guru upheld the simplicity common to South Indian life and indeed would go further and call attention to prehistoric simplicity, he had no false conceptions about the dangerous tendency always present of sinking into lethargic complacency, and, in the name of simplicity, of accepting laziness, dirt and apathy. He was a practical psychologist sparing no effort to simulate the intelligence to counteract slovenly defeatist attitudes. Like wise, he was aware of the dangers of Western restlessness, although he gave whole-hearted approval to many modern innovations, provided they were turned to universally useful or good ends. If apathy or procrastination were the chief personal evils of Indians, then greed and ruthless desire for power were the counterpart evils of Europe and America. Neutrally representing the good of all, he encouraged the universal factors for well-being in all

humanity, those, elements of grace and kind-ness which would bring out in action what was best for all. He encouraged those who renounced for the sake of pure wisdom, who transmitted the ambition for personal power into the thirst for finalized Self-knowledge.

In a world which, since his death, has passed through the horrors of another tragic war, which has now the frightful development of atomic science, and which still seeks the formula for lasting social peace and happiness, the Guru's solution for the attainment of the general good is still the only one which is sound.

His aim was to direct the will of man so as to establish honest relations between himself and others, since righteousness or justice at all levels, personal, economic and political, depends upon sanctions springing from Self-knowledge or Wisdom. Action must follow only after contemplation. Wisdom can never arise out of action, but always later. He urged his followers in every way to comprehend the necessity for the still, wakeful, contemplative life, as a beginning from which all else flows, meaningful. On the one hand, there was this life here and now, involving the body and all action, full of necessities and wants. On the other hand, there was the informing intelligence embracing all in non-dual wholeness. The first was the relative, the other the Absolute. These were the two polarities of the one central axis constituting Reality. To introduce other factors led to escapist illusions. To omit one of these two poles led to distortion or madness. The secret lay in giving primacy to the Absolute by which alone the relative made sense. For harmony to prevail at all levels, in every field of human life, continual reference had to be made to the

basic underlying unity. Then imagination could be put to service of Self's endeavour to bring about outside the happiness which was of the very nature of the unborn Self within.

Birth, systematized religion, nation and opinions, social status, one's very name and form, language and country were all relative things, or relative accretions affixed by time and nature upon the Self, never to be involved in disturbing the Self, and to be rigorously excluded in attaining a view consistent with absolute wisdom. That view rightly established, right action followed naturally and sweetly, with no place for dissention, while life was fulfilled without pain for one and all.

The Embodiment of Advaita

Summed up, this universal,—a vision held by many before him it is true, but required as ever by modern mankind—could be said to indicate a co-operative brotherhood extending wherever humanity existed and not at all limited to time and place.

In his last years the Guru became known throughout India. Many famous people paid homage to him at his chief centres of activity in Travancore. He had given a tremendous impetus to the arts in this region, and throughout the Malayalam-speaking world, a real renaissance of literature sprang up. One of the most famous of his disciples was the poet, Kumaran Asan, in whom the Guru took a deep interest, guiding his studies and inspiring his best poetry. Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi visited the Guru.

The Guru was never idle. Yet he always had plenty of

time to spare, and was available to all. He was like his teaching entirely public. Secrecy was not his nature, and the only engimatic part of him was the inevitable impossibility of finding those who could understand his deepest wisdom. But his words were never withheld. He travelled annually througout South India and Ceylon, even when he was in his last years of illness. There was always some unitive lesson to be given to all. Through his disciples and admirers abroad, he was in touch with affairs much further afield than India.

Despite all these multifarious contacts with the world of action, the Guru constantly maintained the still poise of a bird resting on a high branch of a tree above the din of the market-place, a witness of all, and a final reference, the still Knower of the Field, the centre of the gyrating dynamo. It has been related of him that on one occasion when travelling by train the party who were with him rushed out of the compartment immediately on arrival at their destination. The Guru remained seated, quietly. After the scramble and bustle was over, he then stepped on the platform with dignified, unhurried ease. He was always doing little things like that to give example to his words.

Wherever he went he gave himself and his teaching unstintingly. Even in his last months, when death was near, he used his illness to drive home the need for intelligencee at all times. He loved children and saw in them the untainted simplicity, purity and innocence which were qualities so patently manifest in himseli.

Truly it may be said that Narayana Guru lived and died with that serene joy and peace of heart which is the secret of the grand movement of winds and rivers, of clouds

and stars. He was a life dedicated to wisdom, a lesson in philosophic charity, a truly reasonable life, the life of an embodiment Advaita—the perfect Guru.

To Narayana Guru, Malbar, India, and the whole world owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude. What would please him most? An annual celebration in his memory? Orations and fireworks? These things he would accept, no doubt—nor for what they represent in themselves, but for the aim they have or should have for all who participate in them. A philosopher's birthday is not so much for the glorification of the respected personality, noble and beloved as the person may have been. But for the philosopher and for all who really adore him, it is for the glory of high wisdom herself. The forms even the names—of philosophers come and go. But wisdom is timeless. That remains. Narayana Guru has not died as long as his Word prevails. That sacred Word knows no birth or death, but leads all to the supreme happiness which is all filling. The fraction which was the phenomenal appearance of the Guru remains as a mere fragrance in the memory of many, but the glorious Word which he presented afresh lives on forever glorified by his generous presence, and it is to that hallowed Word and its undiminished power to make all men free that all who cherish the Guru's memory, should dedicate themselves, understanding it and thus paying full tribute to the Guru, himself thereby.

Today, the voice of the Guru comes to us afresh through the living channel of his foremost disciple and Guru, Dr. P. Natarajan. He, more than any other, has spread the precious Word of the Guru Narayana in far-off places, and by understanding the full purport of his Master,

has ensured that the saving Word shall be a beacon on high for the safe guidance of all. Hence, South India and the World is doubly blessed not only in having the grand Narayana Guru, but in having a faithful disciple to uphold the teaching, a Guru by spiritual trust and inheritance.

It is under the auspices of the Gurukula Movement of which Dr. Natarajan is the Founder-head, that this introduction to Narayana Guru has been produced. The chief aim of the Movement is to ensure that his teaching or way of life and wisdom shall not perish from the earth, and that the high place of such wisdom and of Narayana Guru shall be established firmly for the freedom and good of all. It is only in this way that, throughout all time to come, Narayana Guru can be justly honoured—in terms of that wisdom with which forever is associated the holy name of this Warrior Rishi.

WISDOM'S ANTIQUE HOME

While East and West are merely relative terms, and wisdom itself a universal value, we cannot say that wisdom is spread or has survived equally everywhere. The question arises why wisdom seems to have survived in certain places and not elsewhere. South India happens to be one such place. It is the home of about eighty million human beings. The world is very big and even with modern communications, there are still people who have never heard of Madras or Madurai, and who would be at a loss to say where exactly these places were. On the other hand, there must, be a very few anywhere in the world, who have not heard of curry and rice, or pepper and ginger! These are antique words, dervied from Tamil, the chief language of South India, and they have been current coin since the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans who traded with the kings of South India.

Hub and Rim Cultures

Several conditions have conspired to make South India a settled home of culture and wisdom. Nature there is kindly, and if our blood temperature indicates the best climate for survival, we can understand why wisdom has flowered in such a climate. Gone are the great civilizations of the past, Egypt, Sumeria, Babylonia, Greece and Rome and Japan's and China's are rapidly disappearing under the pressure of destructive commercial or ideological forces. Indian and South Indian civilization especially, is unbroken from the times when these past cultures flour-

ished. Pagan India remains. And those who love the wisdom which it has nurtured, must see that it too does not go under. The reason for survival has been geographical mainly, for until a few centuries ago, the Southern triangle was protected by jungle and ocean, except for the more adventurous of traders, and saved from invasion by mountain and forest, much of which, even today is rarely trodden by humans.

On a contemplative's map of the world, the place of South India would be at the hub. Beyond that hub, the wheel of life radiates and circles with increasing speed. But at the core it settles down negatively or neutrally. Life at the rim, however, tends to throw life off its bearings completely. This image of the life-wheel is found in the *Upanishads* (e.g.,) *Brihadaranyaka* I. v. 15; II. v. 15; *Chandogya* VIII. xv. 1; *Prasna* VI. 6; *Svetasvatara* I. 4-6; VI. 1). It corresponds also to the absolutist vision of the *Yogi* of the *Gita* who "rests in the nine-gated city from which the life-functions and organs radiate like the spokes of the wheel.

On this psycho-physical map, even New Delhi or Bombay are nearer to the rim than the hub. Nehru admitted in his *Discovery of India* (Culcutta edition, P. 9) that "It is action and the thought of action that fills me." When we reach the marginal regions on the contemplative map, whose centre is stillness and whose circumference is furious noise and excessive speed, we find as might be expected, that they are all characterized by a peripheral intoxication of activity, ambition and power, whether America, Europe, Japan or Australia, Bombay or Singapore. At the roaring rim's edge, the human psyche is wide open to an invasion of dynamic stimulants. In key-words the

advertisements reveal the urge to action—everything is *compelling, exciting, moving, thrilling, stirring and challenging*.

While there are deaths from tigers and cobras in India, can their number compare with the killings on the roads of the most 'civilized' countries? One thousand people will be killed during a bank holiday! And people go mad and turn to crime, cases of crime reaching to millions every year. This means just that people are thrown off the rim of life altogether into the limbs of insanity. Only mad men would encourage thermonuclear weapons, which are based on the centrifugal dispersal of energy from its safe atomic core. And side by side with this mad love of power there is contempt for things of the spirit, or for wisdom values.

Survival of the Coolie and the Yogi

Long before the invasion of "the Aryan birds of prey", to use Prof. Jung's expressive phrase, it is clear from archaeological evidence on the seals found in the Indus Valley sites, that the indigenous people of India worshipped a Siva-like deity in typical *yogi* posture, while the cities were over-run, their ways of life disrupted, their contemporaneous cultures, identical in every respect survived in the deep Asian South, for the climatic and geographical reasons we have already mentioned.

The Aryans were not all "men of action", there were what the *Gita* describes as the *Daivik* or illuminated as well as the *Asurik* or demonic men of action, the contemplative thinkers as well as the brutal killers. This broad division still holds true today. There are ambitious "brahmins" who will stop at nothing, and there are humble studious

“brahmins” who are kindly disposed. The Aryan “seers” or *rishis* found the indigenous *yogis* at their retreats in the forests, and from them were only too willing to learn of the contemplative ecstatic forms of religious life. It is this fusion of seer and *yogi* which gives rich value to the *Upanishads* and accounts for their subtle revaluation of the Vedic religion. But without the contemplative contribution due to the wisdom of the indigenous people of India, these works in Sanskrit would never have appeared.

Sanskrit itself is not so ancient as it is supposed to be. In its finished state, its age is probably not more than 1500 years. Its very name means “put together”, an artificial language constructed for the use of a closed priestly group, built up out of the *prakrits* or “natural” languages. In Europe, the natural or *prakrit* languages are English, French, German, Russian, etc. while Esperanto or the sign-language of mathematicians might be called *Sanskrits*. The non-perception of this fact has befuddled historians and even philologists who have been misled by Sanskrit histories and legends (*puranas*). Whether in India, Germany, Britain or elsewhere, the Aryans as active ideologists and imperialists, have always been excellent propagandists. This is mentioned, not to decry or damn Sanskrit which has its own intrinsic beauty and its virtues, but to correct wrong linguistic notion still widely and firmly held by “experts” at home and abroad.

The indigenous *yogi* was also a lover of drumming. The drum or the *parai* gives us the clue to the name pariah or *paraiyar* in Tamil, which just means “the drummer.” We can imagine the Aryan priests being as upset as the British were with “the infernal din” of the unceasing

drums pounding, cracking and thumping throughout the hot tropical nights.

If the pariah is "the rejected of men," then the coolie is "the most despised." Coolie is also a Tamil word and means "hired worker," a proletarian. What they have in common is their non-aggression, Pariah, coolie and yogi are all examples of a certain temperament which belongs to the true India, surviving from a prehistoric and pre-Aran past. The peaceful casteless Indian society before the coming of the Central Asia hordes, traded with ancient Summeria and Akkad, and the Tamils as traders and settlers gave the name to Malaya, which means simply (like Malabar) the Land of Mountains. The Tamils were world citizens. The Tamil *Pura Nanura* says :

"To us all towns are one, all men are kin,
Life's good comes not from other's gift, nor ill;
Man's pains and pain's relief are from within."

They had what Bergson calls "an open society" and this deep-rooted attitude still survives in the very nature of the people. The group of languages called Dravidian, to which Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tulu belong, have a reflexive or subjective, introverted construction, whereby the speaker always returns to the *subject*. For example, "I am in this room" in Tamil, literally would be: "I, this room in, *Being, am I*" (*nan inth areiyil irukiren*); and "She was here" would be "She, there, *being, was she*" (*aval ange irunthal*). When a Tamilian takes leave instead of just saying "I am going," he says "To go, *I am coming*" (*poi varukiren*). This subjective-reflexive is an important psychological feature which indicates the introversion completely absent and alien to

objective-turned languages such as English.

The gentleness of the coolie, the vigour of the drummer and the cestatic detachment of the man of unified outlook, known at the *yogi*, come together in the character of the South Indian. He is not refined. He is even crude, but there is plainness, even a subdued dignity and open honesty. He is never in a hurry, never anxious to go restlessly forward, negative in his ways, retiring, will even allow himself to be pushed aside, and feels no need for pride. It is on such a soil that contemplative wisdom flourishes. From this soil, a wisdom flower has blossomed from plain simple sources, which has enabled this coolie-pariah-yogi to survive the waves of invasion, bending before the storms like the tender grass, with its grass-root culture, remaining at the insignificant, harmless tail-end of the world dragon, and avoid in the roaring tumult at the fire-belching dragon's head end at the giddy rim of places like New York or London or Brussels or Moscow.

The *Gurus* are unanimous in declaring that no action has ever made anybody wise. On the contrary, the acceleration of action, of *pravritti* rather than *nivritti* as a *marga* or way, leads to insanity and death. Too much action is inimical to Nature and life, which for the most part in field and forest, is calm and still. Active temperaments, the Nehrus and Churchills of this world, will continue to add to the world's burden of problems and anxieties, while the humble coolie or unwanted pariah, quietly watching the disgraceful spectacle, may they not turn out to be far wiser, closer to Nature, and nearer to becoming the darling of the Absolute, the *yogi*, and the preservers of life?

Social and Spiritual Values

When I write of the wisdom of South India, I hasten to say that I have no intention of fostering any political, regional or other rivalry. But, as G. T. Garrat has said about New Delhi's architecture, there is a *damnosa hereditas*, a heritage of ruin, entrenched in North India. The result of a succession of devastating invasions, one overlapping the other, is a flattening of the spirit of the North. It is a psychic anaemia. Outside, in a mechanical estimation of values, the coolie is nobody, mere robot hands, limbs and strong back to clear away muck, to be employed like an animal to haul or push a cartload. These are *harizontal* elements. But he has certain rich *vertical* characteristics which redeem him in spiritual content, giving him a status, from a spiritually absolutist point of view, which is far beyond his deplorable social condition.

This is partly true of the dispossessed of society everywhere, but poverty's brutalizing effects have been less noticeable in the Indian coolie for the reason that he is the heir of an ancient legacy which has inwardly nourished him with a spiritual dignity, in spite of a cruel pariah fate. What is it that most people take as a standard of status? The coolie can be easily transformed into a respectable civilized man. A little learning, hair-dressing, tailoring, the acquisition of some superficial tricks of behaviour and etiquette, plus the accessories of modern life, the Parka pen, the Swiss watch, and the ex-coolie will be indistinguishable from the standard type, who at present feels modern and "with it," the sort you can see any day at any airport. Superficial civilized social values are not so hard to acquire.

But when we think of transforming his dialectical

counterpart, the gimmick-educated product of the "rim" culture into the contemplation-motivated human being, the task is well-nigh impossible. We find we are dealing with an interior soil which is on the whole blighted and sterile. That is why, and not for physiological reasons, it is so very hard for the "modern" man to become the yogi. Interior values go counter to the external. Values depending upon mastering a skill can be learned. Values arising from human understanding cannot be attained at all through action and skill. Stillness, silence, reason, contemplation and unitive insight are necessary concomitants, and also a certain indifference to what is happening in the world, and an outward kind of lazy relaxation, an attitude counter-balanced by a steady bright awareness within. This is the basis of the yogi character, and we find this in the plain South Indian nature, a nature from which the wisdom teacher or *Guru* is born.

Why Gurus are unpopular ?

When the word *Guru* is mentioned, there is always somewhere a certain tension, a cagey discomfort, even in India. Why is this? The world of necessity representing fixed standards and establishments, customs, what are called social *mores*, moral attitudes and manners, always resents or objects to the ways of the absolutist. This is found even in the Bible, where you find the familiar story of Martha and Mary, Martha busy about the work of the home, Mary sitting at the feet of the *Guru* Jesus. The one was active and serviceable, the other apparently a lazy good-for-nothing. And yet the *Guru* praised her, giving Martha a secondary place.

The understanding of this *Guru*-situation is the basic clue to the understanding of the wisdom of South India. It is not Christian piety or goody-goodism. The Gurus have all been fairly heterodox in matters of religious behaviour. For them, the Sabbath was made for man and not vice-versa. Gurus have always been disturbing elements, melting the ice-formations of religion and society. The main reason then for the dislike of the Guru is really a form of intense spiritual envy or jealousy. In Sanskrit the name for this is *asuya*. You find this *asuya* in the pretenders to wisdom. The wise man arouses their immediate opposition; they feel in terrible danger of exposure. Comfortable face-values can no longer be maintained in the presence of the *Guru*. The folly and often absurdity passed-off as spirituality suffers a death-blow. All forms of caste harshness and patriotism, and conceits due to ancestry and superstition, to wealth, status and academic pretension are quickly disposed of by a few penetrating remarks. Nobody likes this sort of thing—except plain lovers of truth.

The *Guru* cannot help being a revaluator of fixed tradition. Even if he would like to, he cannot hide his wisdom. Truth is as much a habit with him as hypocrisy and pretence are habits with the majority of respectable conformists. Naturally his presence is a source of deeply-rooted antagonism to the social ego. He is therefore, smeared with all kinds of charges—of being a corrupter of youth (like Socrates), a danger to the State and to religion (like Jesus), an iconoclastic rationalist or Buddhist in disguise (like Shankara)—or just impossible and mad. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the *Guru* rousing the spiritual envy of

those whose secure ways of life are shown to be false. In spirituality the man who knows what he is talking about is just an intolerable nuisance.

Wisdom as a Ruling Science

The wisdom teachers are not opposed to the social advantages of mechanics and invention. Everything supporting the genius and bright intelligence of humanity is welcome, as long as it is universal in spirit and aims at the welfare of all, and of the whole of life. But the two sides of human nature, the material and the spiritual or body and mind, must be neatly adjusted and not be, as at present, all lopsided, because of the emphasis on superficial achievements. Material values have to be delicately and unitively related through dialectics or *yoga*, to wisdom values. Values emerging from the world of Physics, such as the usefulness of atomic energy have to be subordinated to higher values coming from more important biological facts, such as the fact of the unity of humanity and of the whole of life. To upset that unity by destruction of any of its parts would be wrong here. "Energy for the welfare of all" would be the formula here. To realize this *all the time* in all human affairs requires a more imperative or commanding science than either Physics or Biology. This science is the speciality of the man of unitive vision, the *Yogi*. This is nothing less than a science of the Absolute or *Brahma-vidya*. Its method is first to find the pair of oppositions, and then to discover the common factor which unites them and then to cancel-out the differences. Citizenship under the common sun for all humans, or "world Citizenship" cancels out all national citizenships. Food for

all without distinction of country, climate or other factors, unites the whole of humanity and abolishes the injustices of plenty and scarcity in various parts of the world. Room for all any where on earth abolishes the prejudices of colour bars and the stupidity of huge habitable areas which are empty with the equal absurdity of overcrowding in other areas, and so on. The application of this spiritual yogic attitude of seeing *sameness* (*samatvam*) instead of seeing differences, at once solves the age-old problems of humanity. The *Gita* in fact defines *Yoga* as sameness (*samatvam yoga uchyate*—II. 48) and avoiding by disconnection that which produces suffering (VI. 23). The entire *Bhagavad Gita* is a textbook (*Sastra*) on this revalued *Yoga* in reference to *Brahmavidya* as its colophon claims. It is not a religious text, as some say, but a *Guru-sishya samvada* a dialectical *modus operandi* in the light of the Absolute.

Some day the proper history of contemplative man will be written and the high place of honour will be given therein for master figures like Ramakrishna, Shankara, Vivekananda and Ramana and Narayana Guru. Jung divided mankind into the two types of the introvert and the extravert, the man who looks and lives within, and the man whose life is turned outwards to action and pleasures. But it would be more correct in our context to say that both types of human character are present in every human being. The domination of one way prevails due to environment and circumstances. It is in out of the way corners of the world, such as South India that wisdom so often appears in wise men. It is also a cause for alarm when such secure environments suffer a change, as when this

sheltered region is imperilled by both unsympathetic pressures from the dynamic world of extraverts and by an internal introverted indifference to this danger.

South Indians are indeed disturbed by the alien flood steadily rising round their cultural doors, but they are inclined to see only its superficial aspects and to think of it merely in terms of political action. This is highly coloured by a new kind of local linguistic patriotism, which itself is foreign to their ancient culture and best interests. The surge of the world flood can be met best by a world approach, outside the merely comparatively trivial issues of an Indian or Asian situation ; and such a world approach accords easily with South India's deepest cultural roots, since in prehistoric times South India was part of a civilization which was global in character.

Let us look at this antique background and have a glimpse of the history of contemplative man.

The Aryan Myth

The first Indus valley discoveries were made by accident in the winter of 1923 by a staff-member of the Department of Archaeology, Mr. R. D, Banerji. Later excavations have yielded overwhelming evidence of a revolutionary order which turns completely upside down all the theories connected hitherto with the ancient history of India. A new history and a new prehistory of Indian philosophy, the full import of these discoveries is hardly recognized. Prior to this discovery of a civilization akin to that of present day South India and extinct Sumeria of 4000 B.C., the belief was almost universally held that the Aryans came to India as a superior people who civilized the great mass of

India's inhabitants. It was taught that everything that was worth while, from civic life to the common crafts, from the arts of life to the institutions of government, up to religion and philosophy in India, was entirely due to the "noble" or "Aryan" newcomers. This, of course, was their own account. It was foisted upon the pages of history and it was accepted even by scholars and historians. No other record was of course available—the conquerors had seen to that. They also propagated the legend of having come to India very many thousands of years B.C.

Indra stands Accused

Well, the truth in time comes out, even out of the grave, as it were, of the Great cities the Aryans destroyed. The eloquent records revealed by the diligence of excavators and from other sources that we now know to look for, has utterly shattered the whole of this self-propagated myth. We are now able to see that the very reverse of the Aryan picture of Indian History is true. The Aryans are seen to be like any other group of pillaging destructive invaders. They had the advantage of a new weapon of war, the fast spoke-wheeled horse-chariot. Their date of entry found by the carbon-14 (radioactive) process is agreed upon by scholars to be around 1700 to 1600 B.C.

A particularly ferocious group of Aryans were a terror even to their own kin in India and became the Asuras or Assyrians "who came down like a wolf on the fold" again with the war chariot. All over the Fertile Crescent, from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf, the overlords spoke a language recognized as "Aryan" by philologists and distinct from the agglutinative speech of the people which

had affinities with the language group now spoken only in South India and in a few odd corners of the rest of India as fossil elements, and all known collectively as Dravidan. From the philosophic point of view, we see that the Aryans, wherever they went were of the mainly extraverted type common to all aggressors. Their deities give them away, since their gods were their hypostatized values. As Prof. Stuart Piggott remarks in *Prehistoric India to 1000 B.C.* (Pelican 1950, p. 260) :

Indra (in the *Rig Veda*)...is the apotheosis of the Aryan battle-leader; strong-armed, colossal, tawny-bearded, and pot-bellied from drinkings, he wields the thunderbolt in his more god-like moments, but fights like a hero with bow and arrows from his chariot. 'He is strong, young, immortal and ancient,' as Keith puts it; his appetite is enormous, and he devours prodigious quantities of beef, porridge and cakes, swilling them down with the intoxicating *Soma* or with mead, and both his drunkenness and its after-effects are described with convincing fidelity. (It is) artless barbarism.....so curiously transmitted in the sophisticated Sankrit verse.

In the *Rig Veda* (1.53), is praised for "overthrowing twice ten Kings of men" and "destroying castle after castle" of the non-Aryans, who are said to be noseless (*anasa*), dark-skinned and speaking an unintelligible speech. But they had vast stores of gold which the Aryans grabbed. These forts and castles were formerly thought to be mythological, for they were somewhat out of accord with the Aryan picture of a mass of primitive uncivilized people.

But now, as Prof. Wheeler says in *Ancient India* (No. 3, 1947, p. 88):

The recent excavation of Harappa may be thought to have changed the picture. Here, we have a highly evolved civilization of essentially non-Aryan type, now known to have employed massive fortifications, and known also to have dominated the river-system of north-western India at a time not distant from the likely period of the earlier Aryan invasions of that region... On circumstantial evidence, Indra stands accused.

Those who cannot travel to Pakistan to see all these eloquent ruins for themselves, can visit a similar city, called Lothal which is about sixty kilometres from Ahmedabad in Gujarat. We can certainly look in vain for anything of the contemplative life or the *yogic* disposition in this ancient Aryan society or in its early literature, such as the *Rig Veda*. As far as concerns the life of wisdom, the Aryan contribution has just been another *damnosu hereditas* referred to earlier.

Historians and Guesswork

The pre-Aryan people of Mesopotamia referred to the Aryans as the Amurru, "people who had never known a city." The word *ur* for city, is common to the whole ancient region from Palestine (*cf.* names like Uru-Salem or Jerusalem) to India, inclusive of that Ur where Abraham was born, Ur of the Chaldees. In South India, there are thousands of places having the suffix Ur. Again, the place-names on the prehistoric map of Sumeria and of modern South India (e.g., Eridu and Erode) are so similar that anyone who

studies it impartially cannot but think of one consolidated territory. Step by step, from site to site, from the Indian South to the Indus Valley, and through Mesopotamia and Palestine to Minoan Crete in the Mediterranean, when one gathers together the findings of the various specialists in archaeology, anthropology, mythology, linguistics, Geography and even hydrology, and when one looks at it all from the viewpoint of Southern Asia rather than from that of Western Europe, a new image of the past slowly forms in the mind's eye of the imaginative historian.

Certainly it is guesswork, but based on much diffused and scattered fact. But is not all prehistory and much of what passes for recorded history just the inspired guesswork of experts who, provided they have enough university degrees and personal publicity get away with almost anything? It is a kind of academic browbeating. This need not trouble us here where the facts, the evidence and the affinities or so overwhelmingly plentiful. In this respect Piggot is better qualified than his contemporary Woolley, because he is capable of seeing the historical scene with Oriental awareness. Piggot is quick to note the relevance of the peepal tree (*ficus religiosa*) that ancient sacred fig-tree under which the Buddha, like the prehistoric first yogi *Siva*, set in contemplation. But when Woolley finds a necklace of golden peepal leaves at 6000 years old Ur of the Chaldees, he is mentally still dreaming of dear old English woodlands and calls them "beech-leaves" as if the beech ever grew in the tropics of Asia! Having seen them for myself in the British Museum, I am in no doubt whatever about their being faithful reproductions of peepal leaves.

Religion of Ecstasy

In surveying all these ancient civilizations we find a common religious attitude of ecstasy and virility. The bull and the phallus (lingam), the leafy glade, the sacred tree and the wild animals, all belong together, with the high place for worship, the use of oil anointing, and the temple pool for the ritual bath or baptism, with the worshipper alternately in a frenzied abandon of terrible irrepressible dancing joy, and at other times sunk in deep mystical union with moon-crowned or horned God. It is there on the frescoes of the palace of Minos in Crete, in the wall-paintings of the mysterious Etruscans in North Italy. We find this religion referred to as the worship of the Golden Bull or Calf, shocking to the socialized Jehovah-dictator God of Moses. although Jacob earlier in biblical legend sets up a stone and anoints it, just like any simple peasant in South India, and we can trace its symbols on pottery from the shores of the Indian Ocean to the shores of the Atlantic. The 1500.-years-old paintings in the caverns of Southern France are covered with sacred bulls. In the *Bacchae* of Euripides too, written in the fifth century B.C., where one of the curious legends concerning Dionysus (the ancient *Siva* of Europe) is dramatized, we are told that the God came from Asia. He intoxicates everyone with his divine madness and like a Pied Piper of the Absolute, dressed in skins, he goes off with the frenzied women of the court of the sceptic Pentheus into the mountain-forest.

Dr. Jane Harrison, writing of Dionysus in *The Myths of Greece and Rome* (Benn, 1928, pp. 75-77) provides as with some comment which might well apply to the type of religion which was once common to the whole Eurasian

world :

The worship of Dionysus has one characteristic that distinguishes him from other gods, and is of special interest in helping us to understand the making of a god. Dionysus is always accompanied by a worshipping band, a *thiasos*... Dionysus is the god of ecstasy... By becoming one with the god he had projected, the worshipper of Dionysus attained immortality. That is the doctrine of each and every mystery religion. No one sought to become Zeus, or Athene, or Apollo. That would have seemed folly and insolence.

And she quotes the following from Euripides :

INVOCATION TO DIONYSUS (SIVA)

Appear, appear. whatso thy shape or name,
O Mountain Bull, Snake of the Hundred Heads,
Lion of the Burning Flame !

O God, Beast, mystery, come !

and then comments :

The mystery gods represent the supreme golden moment of Greek mythology. They are caught, fettered for an instant in lovely human shapes ; but they are life-spirits barely held ; they shift and change. Dionysus is a human youth, lovely with curled hair, but in a moment he is a wild bull and a burning flame. The beauty and the thrill of it !

Barely held yes, because they were quickly ousted by the Aryan Olympic family of gods by Zeus Pater (Sanskrit *Dyaus Pitar*), by Ouranous (*Varuna*), Helios (*Surya*), etc. But the tree and the dance left their traces and there is the

Christams Tree and the Maypole and horn-dances and many other peasant relics of the old Dionysiac religion. The horned god of the forests became the Devil as rival to Jehovah of the Christians.

Only in India do we find this prehistoric religion still dominant and along with it the contemplative ecstatic traditions. It is not distinguished by too much reliance on sacred books. It is linked with that natural pantheism of hylozoism which recognizes the divine in stone, river, tree animal as well as in man. The messages of its stone language, its symbols and images are profounder and more affective to the naturally contemplative coolie-pariah masses than the mere repetition of formula of the study of words in books. There is nothing in it of fixed creeds. Frenzy is still possible and can be indulged in unashamedly. The individual worshipper can throw himself into the numinous with trembling and dance. It is a direct gate through which he passes away from the harsh world of economic necessity, of buying and selling, of working, of cooking and eating. He becomes one with life, one with the animals, one with the forest, and one with *Siva*.

Now to my mind a good dose of this type of religion into the hard sin-soaked core of modern Christianity would go a long way towards making millions of people healthy and sane. The Siva religion is one of joy. As the greatest breakers of the natural law of human kindliness or compassion or *karunya*, and with a guilt conscience, the Aryans hated this god of the people. Their gods were sky-gods, Olympians. The Aryan spirit and the Aryan religions are far too much in evidence in the world at large. A revised look at history, bearing in mind what is already self-evident

in South India, gives us a warning of what breaks up human solidarity, so that we can be vigilant.

India's Cultural Roots.

A religion of happiness and joyous abandon, without fixed creed and absolutist in its abolition of the difference between worshipper and worshipped, encourages the arts of peace and culture in society. Whatever is best in Indian culture particularly compassion and *ahimsa*, derives its origin, either directly or by adoption, from the over-run, pre-Aryan peoples. *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes intulit agresti Latio*, "Conquered Greece took her savage conqueror captive, and introduced the arts into rustic Latium." While the whirlwind destruction was furiously raging, a centripetal transformation was slowly going, on and unwittingly, the cultured vanquished, had the historical but unconscious task of civilizing the conquering Aryan invaders, those, remember, "who had never known a city." No cities have ever been found in the prairies or steppes of central Asia. Is this not proof enough? Then as now, that region, was occupied by pastoral nomadic tribes.

The entire plan of the cities and the very style of the houses of Ur in Southern Iraq and at Mohenjo-Daro and Lothal, were adopted by the Aryans when at last they had to settle down. But these are exact replicas of the usual pattern of houses still enduring in the Tamil villages throughout South India. Before these revealing ruins were discovered, scholars of East and West accepted the Aryan version, that they civilized India. It is only these twentieth century discoveries which have given the showdown after 3500 years of false claims.

And so too with the arts and industries—the cultivation of cotton, of wheat, barley and most probably rice, of brickmaking and a drainage system as perfect as any we have today, of otransportation and shipping (the harbour at Lothal, lined with baked brick, is 710 × 116 × 20 feet), the domestication of the bull and buffalo, goat and elephant, with sculpture and jewel-craft, writing, games and measurement. The evidence for this is overwhelming. India has gone over to the decimal system. The Indian rupee had been divided into sixteen annas. This curious measure, we now know, also arose in the pre-Aryan Indian civilization. This is clear from the innumerable sets of weights found at these sites. Their counting runs in the ratio of 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, etc. (see Piggott, p. 181).

The early Indian and non-Aryan culture survived in the South due to a set of fortunate circumstances. Nature's own protection of great forests, the *Dandakaranya* of legend, mountains and deep seas, provided a safe cultural asylum. In more recent times the warrior Mahrathas and Andhras, also made a barrier from northern invasions.

The majority of the people of North India, like the Mahrathas, although speaking an imposed Aryan language, are of the same prehistoric and pre-Aryan stock as those in the South. But, unlike the Southerners, they have been living unhappily in a region wide open to land invasions. The exposed plains of the North have been the open battlefield of periodic external aggressors—Greeks, Sakas, Scythians, Kushans, Huns, Gujaras and Mughals, followed in recent centuries by various Europeans. And even now they are threatened by China. It has always been so. For as the important thing here is the disruption of the contin-

uity of settled life and with it, of the contemplative life. A region of insecurity is not conducive to spirituality and the slow cultivation of wisdom.

After a period of perhaps 1500 years from the take-over of the indigenous civilization, the barbarian Aryans in turn became cultured and were able to build up in the North a society which developed a hierarchical caste system, and that literary Esperanto known as Sanskrit, out of the tribal dialects of their ancestors, and about the fifth century A.D. this reached a cultural peak during the reign of the Guptas. It was the age of Kalidasa. He was a devotee of *Siva* and it is an irony of fate that the greatest period Aryan glory elevated to the supreme height of literature the God of the people they had originally despised. Hence, that Latin quotation about the conquered conquering !

Two-Way Traffic in Sanskrit

While the brahmin pandits were more and more consolidating their theocratic position through the hieratic Sanskrit, we have to note a counter-movement going on inside Sanskrit itself due to the subtle skill of the Gurus in revaluation. In our own small way, we ourselves are using English to give expression to ideas which are entirely novel to "British" or "American" thought. Skilled theologians such as the late Dean Inge were quick to recognize what they deplored as the "Orientalization" of European thought by ideas coming from Asia. This is a process which cannot be stopped except by dictatorship. In the same way, through the sublime poetry of wisdom-poets such as Kalidasa, and even more so by outright Guru-philosophers such as Shankara, Madhva and Ramanuja—all from the South,

but recognized as the greatest philosophic trio of India—the Aryan thought-citadel was itself invaded from within. Ideas stemming from relativistic *Vedas* were revalued and given a subtle contemplative character.

The ideological result was that while the Sanskrit framework remained, its living Aryan body was inhabited by what I might call a Dravidian soul. It only remained for later wisdom-teachers such as Narayana Guru (1854-1928) to complete the reformulation of Indian thought by bringing all this revaluation of spirituality into the open. The Buddha had tried and revalued the meaning of brahmin and pariah in certain *su ras*, Narayana Guru took the word *jati* or caste itself and declared that just as all cows belong to the bovine species, so all men belonged to the human *jati* (*manushyatvam*). Caste, etc. becomes thus, a cancelled cheque. It remains as a historical monument, but nobody lives there and more. Thus, the Sanskrit language of a dominant priesthood has been reformed by poets and Gurus into a language of literary beauty, and a setting for the precious jewels of wisdom and philosophy. Its cultivation now need no longer be felt to be obstructive to the resurgence of the age-old open values belonging to pre-Aryan spirituality.

Historical Clarification

The survival in South India of a culture of ancestral affinity with the peaceful stable trading civilizations of 6000 years ago, and the many links disclosed by the evidence from the Indus Valley and Lothal, and by further review of the pre-Aryan world from the Mediterranean to the Coromandel, clears up much that is baffling. We have to remem-

ber too that "Geologically, the present desert areas of the Sahara and Arabia, Mesopotamia, etc. were fertile grasslands up to 1000 B. C." as Woolley informs us (*Digging up the Past*, Benn, 1933). The present desert regions of India and Pakistan were also heavily forested, The net of the real historian has to be spread far and wide to collate all the facts and bring them together in unity. This is the *Yoga* of history. Few have it.

Sayce was astonished in discovering, seventy years ago, that logs of Malabar teakwood were used in the Temple of the Moon at Mugheir and in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon (6th century B.C.). A kind of checkers game found at Ur is still in use by the peasantry of South India, 5000 years later. The same Babylonian names for deities (long extinct) are used by the Todas of the Nilgiris in their sacred chants (*kwarshms*—names like Ishtar, Enlil, Sin, Ninlil, Anu or On and Ninurtha—a neat piece of linguistic discovery by Prince Peter of Greece (see monograph on the Todas. Madras Govt. Museum, 1951.)

The saddle type of grinding stone used for grinding spices (and not, as most Western archaeologists suppose, for corn) found almost universally in the ruins of the pre-Aryan world, in the Mediterranean in Egypt, etc. is still indispensable in South India, but not, oddly enough in North India, where alien influences have long obliterated its use. And as I know from experience, when South Indian women migrate with their husbands to distant places like Singapore, where they have kitchens of the latest design, all-electric with refrigeration, etc., you will find in a corner the stone-age grinding-stone. Indeed ! I have known Indian families to take the stone to England.

Why did the Tamil Guru Tiruvalluvar, two thousand years ago in the *Kural* need to remind the Tamil people of the low value of meat-eating? Could it not be that he was dealing with a foreign custom introduced from the North? Why was it that the *heterodox* teachers of the North, such as the jaina Mahavira and the Budha had to lay emphasis on *Ahimsa*? They spoke direct to the people and not in Sanskrit either. My own teacher, Nataraja Guru once told me during a discussion on this subject, that vegetarianism comes naturally from the South Indian and that nowhere else in the world today is this kindly virtue so greatly exhibited.

The Romans two thousand years ago complained that the South Indians refused to eat the wheat they brought. What then did they eat? We can only suppose it was rice. It amazes the meat and wheat eaters that the coolie is able to do a hard day's work "on a bowl of rice." Nutrition experts are puzzled, and yet all their propaganda makes no impression on the rice-eater, Rice is a puzzle for the paleo-botanist. Nobody knows its origins, nor when it was first cultivated. It is like the Absolute a, wonderful Mystery. Yet of all crops to raise it means the hardest labour, with more processes to get it into suitable palatable form than any other grain. But rice-eaters refuse to change it for any other grain. Now at the risk of being labelled eccentric in logical thinking, I say that even in this matter rice we have a contemplative situation. For rice as everybody knows, is the easiest of all foods to digest. This makes it ideal for a hot climate. While it certainly nourishes, it does not excite to action like tougher grains belonging to colder climates, It suits the contemplative

personality. That the *Gurus* of India took some heed of character diagnosis from the evidence of the types of food consumed is seen from Vyasa's verses in the *Bhagavad Gita* (XVII. 8-10).

Ex-Oriente Lux

“Out of the East, light” was the ancient Roman proverb, still used as political capital by the modern spokesmen of Indian Nationalism. But it had and still has a meaning. The Romans brought their gold to South India (their hoarded coins have been found in areas from Malabar right across to the other Madras coast) and works like the *Periplus Maris Erithraea* tell us they even brought their gods and erected temples at Muziris (present day Cranganur), even as the Portuguese brought their savage inquisitorial religion and built churches. But religious movements were not all onesided. There was a to-and-fro movement from the most ancient times. An ivory statue of *Lakshmi* has been found amid the ruins of Pompeii near Naples, which gives a date at least prior to the first century B.C. Eusebius reports the visit of an Indian Philosopher to Socrates. Indian teachers like Ammonius Saccas were numerous in ancient Alexandria. Rawlinson says: “India was nearer to Europe in the first century A.D. than at any time up to the middle of the nineteenth” (*Legacy of India*, p. 16).

“Ivory, apes and peacocks” were carried to the courts the kings such as Solomon, and millions of dollars, worth of pepper went into the barns of ancient Rome. The old cities of pre-Christian Europe, were all familiar with Indian traders. These traders were [not Aryans. The Aryan

hated the sea and put a religious taboo on sea-travel. But such taboos did not affect the South Indian who lived outside the Aryan world. Hence, they colonized Indonesia and went as far as Siam and Indo-China.

And, most important, wise men also travelled, wisdom was carried across the seas. The distinctive Zen form of Buddhism so popular today by the "hippies" was taken to China in the sixth century by a South Indian Prince of Kanchipuram, known as Bodhidharma. Meanwhile all the outcastes of other lands found a safe sanctuary in South India from brahmins, hunted out of North India by the Huns and others, to the colony of Jews who found refuge in Cochin.

The consciousness of the South Indian is soaked in numinous legend and philosophy. Long dynasties of Gurus and saints have found it a place for tranquil life with a tolerant and understanding audience. Not only is the South Indian non-aggressive—an attitude which is not to be confused with cowardice, for he is as brave anyone else as recent history of world war can affirm—but he is almost indifferent to his own unique heritage of wisdom. Perhaps he takes it as normal and feels astonished that his common-sense attitude is not general in the world. To parody what Pater said of Mona Lisa, the South Indian is "old as the rocks among which he sits" in meditation. For he loves to sit for hours, and can do so because Nature in the South is kindly. He may sit under that same peepal tree like the antique *Siva* of Mohenjo-Doro of so long ago. He is never out of sight of some holy hilltop temple to *Siva* or *Parvathi* of their progeny *Ganesh* and *Subrahmaniam*, with white steps with hollow by the feet of pilgrims for millenia, mounting

up past pillered shrines from base to summit, still alive while the Parthenon and the temples of Egypt are in ruins, still vitalized with the thrilling, spine-tingling sound of the *chank* with its strange evocation of "otherness" than all this...

It is a timeless world to look up to and to live in. And all the long record of history and prehistory that we have delved into, is after all, contemplatively speaking, a small matter in the great cycle of cosmic duration. But the analytical mind of most moderns need this material as a *via media* because their minds are conditioned. So-called fact has to be met with so-called counter-fact, so that the overall neutral truth can be reached, and more "fact" be forgotten in the face of that Light which is Fact with the capital letter. Today South India is near to the rest of the world, part of the jet-age. And yet there is the psychological or spiritual gulf still to be crossed, for transportation into which a revalued history may be one of the means, and thus the thought-made of the man of actions the, extravert, may come close to that of the contemplative.

The wisdom of South India is also humanity's centred in the negative region of the world, but still capable of once more playing its perennial role for the betterment of all. By his temperament, the South Indian hardly ever speaks of himself. It is therefore, a privilege for me to present, in a rather haphazard way, a little introduction to him and to the antique treasure of spirituality and wisdom which he keeps alive.

The Guru, End and Beginning

The nerve-tingling conches blow. As of old thousands

of families flow in colourful batches over the Southland of *Siva*. Millions of bare feet continue to wear down the thousands of granite steps as the pilgrims climb the holy mountains, to give offerings at the great white shrines Acropolis-high. They have bathed in the sacred Kaveri river or in the lotus-pools of the temple. Shy little girls with jasmine blossoms in their oiled black hair, gave with large eyes through incense-laden air at the mysterious Holy of Holies. Like their elders, grave youngsters wearing spotless white loin cloths prostrate before the images, while coconuts are broken and libations made at the feet of the gods. In shady corners under the immense, richly-carved stone pillars, some listen again to a recital by a wandering bard of the immemorial legends. Others will watch throughout the cool night under the palms the dramas where the epics of their ancient heroes are unfolded. And somewhere the prehistoric drums will be thumping on and on... It is at once mysterious because of the numinous factor which fills the whole atmosphere, timeless and wonderful, the *mysterium tremendum*; and at the same time it is deeply human and homely, at once glorious and abandoned and free, with an aftermath which lingers of the deepest religious tranquillity.

Is it then any wonder that out of this spiritual soil great *Gurus* have come into full maturity? Seekers of wisdom have always found a home in South India. Here, there is no wintry blast to distract and freeze humanity. Clothes and houses are indeed almost superfluous, and even the beggars find occasion for happy laughter, and they too have a place which is acknowledged, and they are in no fear of being arrested on charges of vagrancy as they would be

in Europe or America. And laziness is not a crime to be ashamed of in a land where even Nature is half asleep much of the time. It is a land of leisure and has been so forever, a land for contempation. And those who fervently seek the supreme teacher, the *Guru*, he whose kindly words ease the troubles of human bondage, will reach their end which is a new birth and a new beginning, and the words of old reverberate again and again :

*Guru—Brahma Guru—Vishnuh Guru—Devo Mahesvarsh
Guru Sakshat Parabrahma Tasmai Sri Gurave Namah*

“Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is God—the Great Lord (*Siva*), The Guru is the visible Absolute ; my prostrations to the blessed Guru !”

BRAHMA VIDYA : AN EAST WEST APPROACH

Brahmavidya is the wisdom-science of the Absolute. It is not a doctrine at least as commonly understood. It is more a method of using yoga (or dialectics as the ancient Greeks would call it) as a principle capable of uniting every possible view or *darsana*.

The Absolute can be understood, but not through words and therefore, not through doctrines, systems, creeds, ideologies and mind-structures; and yet doctrines, when united with their opposites, are not excluded, but arranged or graded. It is because Brahmavidya alone can accept all approaches, that it has the highest value. It is the value which is the same as the pure Self, which gives value to all the approaches. My aim in this essay is to give some glimpses of agreement between the antique or pre-Christian or Pagan philosophic thought and thought which is often believed to be solely Indian or exclusively Indian.

The Brahmavidya is not a doctrine, is surely the whole point of that well-known book, the *Sarva-Darsana-Samgraha* (All views of Reality grasped together)¹ by Madhava Achaya, who was head of the Sringeri Math in the 14th century. *Vedanta* is included, but not given detailed treatment as the author says this has already been done, separately. *Vedanta* is still a *darsana*, and though it may be the crest-jewel of all systems, it is still a system or doctrine. This is however not the same thing as a yogic attitude which embraces all views and doctrines. *Vedanta* is not at all the same as Brahmavidya. *Vedanta* does not

1. Trans. by Cowell and Gough (Trubner, London 1894).

accept the Charvaka (Materialist) system, nor the Buddhist, Jaina, Saiva, etc. but Brahmanidya does. Brahmanidya is all-inclusive of the sixteen philosophical doctrines covered in this work including *Advaita Vedanta*. A Unified attitude accepts all.

A Method and not a Doctrine

Again, as is well-known, there is the *Sad-darsana*, commonly and wrongly translated as the Six Systems (plural) of Indian Philosophy. It should be called the Six-fold View (singular). The three pairs (Nyaya and Vaiseshika, Samkhya and Yoga, the Purva and Uttara Mimamsa), the last being called *Vedanta* or *Brahma Sutras* all have to be taken together. The whole is a single presentation which would fall apart if they were not all treated as one. It is the treatment and not the specialized doctrines which is important. This treatment is the principle belonging to Brahmanidya. Wisdom and not its expressions is the point to be grasped. The true philosopher or Brahmanidin is not partisan to any special view. That is the evidence of these works.

But most people want a single system. They prefer one *darsana* to another. The great truth here is that Reality cannot be poured into one vessel no matter how big that may be or how superior its stand. As long as there is attachment to one favoured system, the position of Brahmanidya will never be reached. In this respect the so-called Vedantins, many of them, are just as partial as others. It is this favouritism which Brahmanidya transcends. Again I repeat that Brahmanidya is a method, a unitive method, and not a doctrine.

All systems, doctrines, ideologies, structures, philosophical schemes and religious formulations are background material for Brahmavidya. So are the ways of art, of beauty and harmony, and the way of love and supreme *bhakti*. They all grow out of the longing of mankind all over the world, for self-understanding or *Atma-vidya* which is the counterpart of Brahmavidya. From this single aim, there arises all the differentiations peculiar to human types, tribalistically located over the earth, from country to country, with speculations, revaluations, modifications and restatements. They may seem to compete and form watertight compartments, but all go back finally to source. All stem from wonder, that ineffable, sole, unique characteristic of the Self which identifies the Self with the Absolute. Another name for wonder is the *numinous*, awe and delight at the mystery of life.

Wonder and Questioning

From both the East and the West, wonder is the essence of the Absolute. Take the following two passages : First, the *Bhagavad Gita* (II. 29). Here as in all cases where something exceedingly sublime is mentioned, the author leaves the 8-syllabled Anustubh metre for 11-syllabled Tristubh in order to emphasize the importance of what is stated :

“ As Wonder some person This (Absolute) sees ;
And also as Wonder another one speaks ;
Of This as a Wonder another one hears,

Yet even through hearing none knows This at all ! ”

And here is the Western statement from Plato's dialogue *Theaetetus* (155 D) :

“**Socrates**” : I see, my dear Theaetetus, that Theodorus had a true insight into your nature when he said that you were a philosopher, for wonder is the feeling of a philosopher, and philosophy begins in wonder.”

The mood, or *bhava* of wonder is a rare thing today, whether in India or elsewhere. One may marvel at the works of man, his mechanical inventions, like television and space-vehicles, but the wonder is man himself, and the raw universe before man meddles with it. True wonder leads to the asking of the deep basic questions—Who I am? What is the Self? How did all this universe arise? How did the world come to be? What is Being? What is Death? What happens after death? What is Truth? What is permanent in a changing flux of life? Is there certainty to be found? What is Freedom? What is Immortal? How can one answer these questions? Where is the way?

All these questions which arise out of wonder, are the questions of an Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita* or of a Nachiketas in the *Katha Upanishad*, or a young Theaetetus in ancient Athens in all questions which require the skill of a true Absolutist Guru to answer, a Guru Krishna, or Yama (Death), or a Guru Socrates.

I do not think the world today is any less full of young questioners like these. Most people, as ever, thousands of years ago and today, may have other desires than the quest for such answers for self-certainty. We may not hear of the modern seekers, that is all. Those in power, tend to give an impression of wonder and the search being diminished. Indians, like every-body else living in cities, and stamped with a materialist education may seem to be

wholly concerned with the pursuit of material goods and even believing that the attainment of affluent ends justifies any means employed, and this in spite of observing the increasing disgust and world-wide protest of modern Western youth against the whole materialist society with all its riches and alluring machines. Hundreds of thousands of young people in the West have turned their backs on all these shop-window values.

The Disillusioned Generation

City-bred and "Educated" Indians must ask why the hippies and drop-outs have dropped-out. They will be told, quoting Jesus (*Matthew*, IV. 4) that man does not live by bread alone, that material goods, well paid jobs and comforts are not enough. But the other part of Jesus' statement, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," raises the question ; Whose word ? Indeed it raises a whole set of questions.

There are bogus Yogis and fraudulent Swamis everywhere, smart pretenders wearing fancy robes, who deceive the seeker of the Word of Wisdom. The philosophical and spiritual world has as many confidence tricksters as it ever had, who can quote Sanskrit, do a bit of jugglery with holy ashes, stupify and entertain audiences of city people with non-stop oratory. They were there in the time when the *Upanishads* were composed. The *Maitri Upanishad* (VIII. 8) calls them "hindrances to knowledge" and Zankara in the *Vivekachudamani* (Verse 58) says, lecturing is useless. And yet the lectures go on. If you say, but you too are using words ; our reply in extenuation (in the great company of

Sankara and the Buddha and Lao Tzu, who have all dealt with this puzzle) is that we admit the uselessness of words except as sign-posts or words used to remove another thorn, and not for the sake of believing that words are the same as THE WORD. From the word one travels to the non-word, to the silence, from the known to the unknown.

This method, a commonplace in education, applies very much to the subject of Brahmagyda, particularly when backgrounds differ so much in language, culture and geographical and historical factors.

When I was writing this essay, I had an Indian visitor to whom I mentioned the *Bhagavad Gita* quotation on wonder. He understood something of its content. Then I showed him the parallel reference from Plato. He had never heard of Plato. The whole point was missed until I explained.

Again, last month, I had a young Englishman here, a dropout, one of the many thousands of young world-wanderers or *parivrajakas* in quest of the fabled Wisdom of the East. I showed him my collection of the works of the ancient Pagan Gurus of Europe. He was astonished, and with wonder in his voice said that he had no idea that there were such source-books. Modern education is no longer liberal and wide. It is narrowed down to meet the needs of a technological establishment. This is happening also in India which has gone secular, and if you look up the dictionary you will find that secular means "pertaining to this world, worldly, contrasted with spiritual or religious." This means having a generation of Indians who know as little about, say, the *Upanishads* as my Englishman about the writings of the ancient European philosophers.

Philosophy False and True

If you have read Professor Max Muller's lectures on Indian Philosophy you will remember that he always moved from the familiar to the unknown, by providing a bridge-work of comparative references, so as to enable his European listeners to cross over from Christian mystical doctrines, through Pagan Roman, Greek and Sufi and Zarathustrian teachings, to the source-books of India, so that they might, more easily understand the Indian mode of thought and the common foundations of philosophy and religion anywhere in the world. He worked hard at this all his life, particularly as editor of the fifty volumes of *The Sacred Books of the East*. His intention was to show the unity of all aspirations and speculations of the human being in the universal quest for self-understanding.

To meet at least the main contribution of Indian thought to this whole subject is not a complex system or doctrine. It is rather a directed process of reaching the goal. The aim is deliverance from everything relative, and attaining that freedom which is eternal and absolute.

Doctrines and what are usually thought of as 'philosophies' are secondary apparatus, merely mental constructions or props to hold on to while making the ascent from the relative to the absolute. Ultimately they are all brushed off by a process of inquiry into what is temporal and what is eternal, what is changing and what is constant. It is the process of *neti-neti*, not this, not that, as formulated in the Guru-Wisdom of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. This has its correspondence in ancient Europe by the Socratic method of getting rid of one postulate after another, and expressed by the Christian Mystic's *via nega-*

tiva, the negative way which is the same as the *nivrittī marga*.

Enlightenment being the most intimate 'experience', it is related to and only achieved by the spiritual or philosophic life. Self-knowledge goes side by side with knowledge of the Absolute, *Atmavidya* with *Brahmavidya*, the psychological with the cosmological, until the one merges into the other, into a single nondual unity where words are left behind. Without the philosophic life there is no enlightenment and therefore no philosophy. That is the heart of the matter. It was the heart of the matter in ancient India and ancient Europe. Whether it persists in India today is very doubtful but it is certainly true that it was lost to all but a very rare few in Europe due to the historical role of the authorities of the Christian Church. How many philosophers, so-called are wholeheartedly dedicated to a love of wisdom? Philosophy has become an academic subject. The sophist and the philosopher are poles. The living of a life in pursuit of truth and self-understanding and the method of dialectical or yogic inquiry under a wise man, Guru or true Philosopher such as Pythagoras (6th century B.C.) was the most important part of the subject, far more important than any doctrine or system could be, that any Tom, Dick or Harry could pick up by attending a course of lectures in a university college, presided over by an expert whose understanding of philosophy was in this barren tradition.

Philosophy Thrown Out

My point here will be clear if I give the definitions of philosophy as understood today from Webster's Dictionary

(1961 Edition) :

“Philosophy : 1 *a* : pursuit of wisdom, *b* : a search for truth through logical reasoning rather than factual observation, *c* : an analysis of the grounds of and concepts expressing fundamental beliefs, 2 *a* : (1) *archaic* ; Physical Science, (2) Ethics, *b* (1) : all learning exclusive of technical precepts and practical arts ; (2) : Science and liberal arts exclusive of medicine law and theology (doctor of philosophy) ; (3) : the 4-year college course of a major seminary, *c* : a discipline comprising logic, aesthetics, metaphysics, and epistemology, 3 *a* : a system of philosophical concepts. *b* : a theory underlying or regarding a sphere of activity or thought, 4 *a* : the beliefs, concepts and attitudes of an individual or group, *b* : calmness of temper and judgement befitting a philosopher.”

Now apart from the first definition, namely, “the pursuit of wisdom” all the other meanings that follow are almost irrelevant to Brahmavidya.

From the time that the Christian Emperor Justinian closed the Gurukulas of the Pagan European World in 529 A.D., driving the successor heads of these wisdom institutions into exile, confiscating their property and forbidding lectures on ‘heathen’ philosophy, Church dogma increased and flourished and philosophy proper withered. Even when the study of Greek revived during the Renaissance, starting in Italy in the 15th century, true philosophy was lost. Detached from the personal way of life. it was merely the academic bloodless study which is more or less all it represents in the modern world. The personal way of life was converted into blind faith and loyalty to the Church.

In what is known as Christianity there is no place at all

for Brahmailydia, although Brahmailydia does have a place for Christian theology ! The few who did try to restore the ancient path of individual seeking for truth, those who are known as the Christian Mystics, were frowned on by the authorities and usually treated as heretics. The very idea that an individual could reach the term of his search for truth and say : " I am the absolute " (*aham brahmasmi*) was regarded as blasphemy. It was as dangerous to be a Mystic under the fanatical rule of the Church as it is today to be a militant communist in America or an individualist thinker or capitalist in Russia. Indeed, millions of people, far more than have been killed or maimed by the last two world wars, were tortured and put to death by burning merely because of their faith or their daring to follow truth.

The Heart of the Problem

This tragic loss of the true spirit of philosophy (the living of a dedicated life with or without a Guru, in the pursuit of self-knowledge), this horrible history of persecution, religious war-fare and intolerance (the Inquisition, the wars of the Crusades) and the culmination of the spirit of aggression (from the business rat-race to the actual political and economic wars of colonialism and imperialism) as well as the disillusionment and cynicism—this history has produced in the soul of Western man—are all factors to be understood in attempting to restore the lost secrets of true philosophy as conceived in India and which pose a problem in the presentation of Brahmailydia for Western man. The problem has its wry side and, as far as I can see, has never been properly examined, let alone solved. When most Europeans themselves are unaware of it, it is surely

even more doubtful that the average non-European would be so, not knowing what to look for or whether what he is looking for exists or existed in Europe at all.

In presenting Brahmavidya the Indian contribution should be freed as much as possible from its own excessive background material. I doubt if there is need at all for the non-Indian to learn a whole vocabulary of Indian philosophical terms, where there are already Greek and Latin equivalents which are naturally more easily understood by the Western seeker, or even terms in common usage in what is called Western philosophy. In his zeal and in his natural love for his heritage of wisdom, the Indian will really spoil his case if he behaves like the Christian missionaries. It is really a form of bad manners. It is just as intolerable as the brashness of the experts of science who fly to India—and everywhere else in the “under-developed” parts of the world—in order to “teach the natives” how to grow their own crops, with salesmen behind these new propagandists selling machinery, insecticides, and so on. And even worse, giving false notions of Guruhood and Yoga and Vedanta, let alone Brahmavidya which is hardly, if ever, even mentioned ! No country not even India, has any prerogative of wisdom. For the Brahmavadin, national frontiers have no existence. The human self is the same everywhere, while the heritage of wisdom from any region, is the legacy of all mankind. It is the peculiarity of wisdom that stands above region, above nationalism and above patriotism. Brahmavidya covers this universality of the search of all, for self-understanding and self-happiness and frees man from all caste notions, including that caste notion which is nationalism. Our

whole life, no matter where we are, East or West, is a philosophic, quest, though of course, some are more endowed than others with the urge towards the highest. Such blessed individuals are the "natural metaphysicians" as described by Plotinus the Neo-Platonist (204-70 AD).²

Identity of Thought

Supposing I ask : To what source would you assign the following :

"The knower and the known are one. Simple people imagine that they should see God, as if He stood there and they here. This is not so. God and I, we are one in knowledge."

"Thou must love God as not-God not-Spirit, not-Person, not-Image, but as He is, a sheer, pure Absolute One, sundered from all two-ness, and in whom we must eternally sink from nothingness to nothingness.

"The God-Ground is free from all names and void of all forms."

"As the God-Ground is nameless, and all naming alien to Him, so also the soul is nameless ; for it is here the same as God."

"All man's perfection consists in being separated and stripped of the creature, to behave in the same way in everything and towards everything...not to be more delighted, frightened or afflicted by one thing than by another."

If these paragraphs were translated into Sanskrit you might very well attribute them to some Advaitin. but

2 v. 38. *The Enneads* : 1 iii 3, Mac Kenna Translation (Pantheon, New York).

actually they come from a German monk called Meister Eckhart.³ He lived seven centuries ago at a time when Europeans knew nothing of Sanskrit, let alone the doctrines of Sankara or others.

Indian history is the despair of the ordinary historian or anybody's guess. It is a timeless land. But philosophically India has something which is better than the dates of Kings or Maharajas. It has long lists of gurus and sishyas, what is known as *paramparya*, long lines of succession. The nearest that the Christian Establishment gets to this is the list of Jewish prophets and then to give Jesus as the *one and only* guru with his twelve disciples and eighty or so sympathisers. From the time of Jesus there has been no succession of Christian gurus. The Pope is only the Chief Bishop or ecclesiastical head of the Roman Church, more or less like a *mathadipathi* (head of a religious institution) in India, and while there is a succession of elected Popes, no Pope would ever claim to be the same as Jesus in Guru-authority. The Pope is no more than the head of a politically oriented Church elected by a council of cardinals.

But prior to Christianity and up to the sixth century, in what the Church anathematizes as Paganism, there certainly was *guru-sishya-paramparya* in the exact Indian meaning of the phrase. The Greek word for this is *diadokhe* (what is received across time—succession). While no successor of Jesus as a Guru is given, or by this time, would be acceptable to the orthodox, it is far different with pre-Christian Europe. Quite apart from other sources,

3. From Sermon VI. 4, quoted by Jeanne Anelet-Hustache, P. 59, *Master Eckhart and the Rhineland Mystics* (Harper, New York).

the European is fortunate in having the ten books of a third century Greek writer about whom very little is known apart from his name, Diogenes Laertios. His work is called *Bion kai Gnomon ton en Philosophiai Eudaki Mesanton ton Eis Deka to Proton* (The Lives and Wisdom-teaching of Eminent Philosophers in Ten Books).⁴

This work is a storehouse of information about the gurus of Pagan Europe. Once and for all it clinches any doubt about that all-important principle of Gurbhood succession being present in ancient Europe. It is a happy accident that this work has survived the book-burning and book-suppression by the Church. Diogenes Laertios gives biographical information about eighty-two gurus and mentions over two hundred of their disciples. Among the various lines of teachers, the *guru-sishya sampradaya* (stupidly called "Schools" by writers on the History of Western Philosophy, who are totally ignorant of the principle involved), Diogenes deals with the Pythagorean, the Eleatic, the Miletus, the Platonic, the Aristotelian, the Socrates-Phaedo, the Cynic, the Zeno-Stoic, the Zeno-Poseidonis, the Zeno-Metecles, the Cyreniac, the Socratic-Olympian and the Pythonic.

Further Example

What emerges here is the evidence of accord, the close paralleism and agreement between the European and the Indian methods of instruction and disciplines. We can give a few more examples.

4. Available in two volumes of the Leob Classical Library (Heinemann, London, 1966).

Pythagoras is well-known to all students of mathematics as a genius in that line ; but he should be equally well-known as a grand *bhakta* who was revered by all. Besides Diogenes Laertios, account of the life of Pythagoras, there is also the biography by Iamblikhos. We are told that after he was kidnapped by rough sailors, the godlike behaviour of Pythagoras so much impressed on them, that when they landed him in Egypt, they fell at his feet and covered him with flowers. Such was the awe that he inspired. Like so many, he was also a vegetarian. He tried to reach India but got only as far as Persia.

Then there is the uncouth Antisthenes, one of the many disciples of Socrates, and his disciple the better-known Diogenes of Sinope, who was an absolutist sannyasin, the counterpart in Athens of the naked Digambaras and Avadhutaveshas of India. When Alexander the Great visited him, he said "Ask me any boon you like." Diogenes, who was sunning himself on a rocky ledge, replied "Stand out of the light."

"Aren't you afraid of me," Alexander asked.

"Why, what are you, a good thing or a bad?"

"A good thing."

"Who then," said Diogenes, "Who is afraid of the good?"

When asked where he came from, Diogenes said "The universe is my city." No wonder, Alexander declared, "If I were not Alexander, I would be Diogenes."

Again, is there not a beautiful similarity between Patanjali's grand end of *kaivalya* (aloneness) or unitive identity without a second in the Supreme, the final objective of Yoga, and Plotinus' "flight of the alone to the

Alone?" You have only to point these things out to the Western seeker for him to have instant rapport and sympathy with the Indian equivalent. There is here no doctrine, but once more a method.

There are still more interesting and intimate correspondences. The following is from a letter which Plato wrote to the friends and followers of his disciple Dion :

"This knowledge" (of the method of achieving enlightenment) is not something that can be put into words like other sciences ; but after long continued intercourse between teacher and pupil in joint pursuit of the subject, suddenly, like light flashing forth when a fire is kindled, it is born in the soul and straightway nourishes itself.....

"If I thought these matters could be put into written words adequate for the multitude, what nobler work could I do in my life than to compose something of such great benefit of mankind and bring to light the nature of things for all to see?"

Is it not astonishing that the very core of Indian philosophical tradition, the *Guru-sishya samvada*, the guru-disciple dialogue, is clearly indicated here as present in Europe 2500 years ago ? And there is the image of the fire-sticks which, when rubbed, and used by two persons, one to hold the bottom part with its hole and tinder representing the disciple, who has to be steady and totally absorbed in the operation, and the other the Guru who twirls the stick faster until the light breaks out, just as it is mentioned in the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* (1. 14).

S. P. 237 *Plato's Epistles*, Trans. by Glenn R. Morrow
Library of Liberal Arts (Bobbs Merrill Co., New York, 1962).

The method again, is by self-questioning pushed to its most intense limit, the method of *atma-vichara*. This need for self-questioning was put up in letters of gold over the gateway of Delphi in Greece, the words being GNOTHI SEAUTON—KNOW THYSELF.

This is the answer, all these evidences to the suspicion of wisdom being just Orientalism, another doctrine, another belief...But far from being exclusively Oriental, it is the very heart of European spirituality also.

Restoration of the Grand Alliance

Romain Rolland in his elegantly written sympathetic biography of Vivekananda, has also drawn many parallels between the philosophic and religious thought of Europe and India, and he warns his Indian readers not to judge Europe "by our bankrupts."⁶ "The spirituality of Europe," he says, "is deep and real, and has never ceased to water the subsoil and roots of our great Western nations. The oak of Europe would long ago have been hurled to the ground by the tempests that have raged round it, if it had not been for the mighty spiritual sap rising ceaselessly from its silent reservoir.....Beneath the frenzy of enjoyment and power consuming themselves in surface eddies of a day or of an hour, there is a persistent and immoveable treasure made up of abnegation, sacrifice, and faith in the spirit,"

6. See pp 174 ff, pp 290 ff, and R. Rolland's appendix essay "On the Hellenic-Christian Mysticism of the First Century and Its Relationship to Hindu Mysticism," in *The Life of Vivekananda* translated by B. F. Malcolm-Smith and pub. by the President, Advaita Ashrama, Almora, 6th impression, Calcutta, 1965.

At the end of his book, Romain Rolland quotes a letter from Vivekananda to an Englishman, dated August 9, 1895 and published in the *Prabuddha Bharata* in February 1929, which Vivekananda refers to "a periodic ferment in religion" and of hundreds in India, America and England caught up in a "search for the Unity of Being," and concluding, "There is but one basis for well-being, social, political or spiritual, to know that I and my brother are *one*. This is true for all countries and all people. And Westerners, let me say, will realize it more quickly than Orientals..."

The three-quarters of a century passed since these words were written in that letter, has witnessed revolutionary changes which only those who have lived through the last fifty years can adequately assess. The whole of human social life has been transformed, though hardly for the best with the atom bomb and biological war weapons overshadowing the other discoveries and inventions. Where in Vivekananda's time there were hundreds of potential seekers in the West today, they should be counted in many thousands, out of the many hundreds of thousands who have consciously decided to "drop-out" from the Establishment. The ferment is now in every college in America, and the world is ripening fast towards a spiritual revolution; not a revolution involving killing, but one involving a revaluation of all values and especially those values represented by dogmatic religions and solidified ideologies.

These young people are strongly critical, but I have no doubt, from my conversations with many of them, that they are sincerely searching for absolutist values and for a way of life consistent with such values, and among them there

are certainly many who are ready for that wisdom which Brahmavidya alone can give.

What I have tried to do here is to contribute towards what Max Muller called bridge-building between East and West. The keystone of the bridge is Brahmavidya which accepts every possible vision of the Real from whatever source it may come, irrespective of geography and history, ignoring distance and time. It unifies a Pythagoras with a Ramakrishna, a Plotinus with a Patanjali, a Diogenes with a Digambara Jaina, an Aristotle with a Kapila, a Marx with Charvaka, and an Eckhart with a Sankara. While the orthodox Christian or Hindu may shudder at the audacity of such a broad sweeping harvest of unity, this cannot be helped; for the orthodoxies belong to a dead age. The world is now in a new phase and appears to me ripe for the restoration on a higher range of that ancient harmony, that grand alliance between the spirituality of the East and the West, to the advantage, and to use Vivekananda's term, the well-being of both.

THE BRAHMAVADIN CONFRONTS THE DROP-OUT

It is a common place to say that the whole trouble of mankind is that the spiritual has not kept pace with the material. It is the old story of the sorcerer's apprentice. During the absence of the magician his apprentice found the book of magic and started to play tricks. In no time he had the world reeling and as he did not find the *mantram* to stop it, everything got out of hand. The magician came and quickly restored order.

Such is the case with mankind today. He has the formulae for making trouble but has no formulae for making peace and happiness. He has knowledge but not wisdom. With atomic power man can now move mountains. He can also blow us all to smithereens. Atomic power gives instant death just as electronics gives us instant time and space through radio and television. With jet planes, instead of weeks we can travel anywhere in hours. Men have walked on the moon and have seen the Earth as a moonlike globe. Eyes and hearts and other organs can be transplanted.

But in spite of all, man suffers : not only are wars still waged, but the whole planet, earth, water and air, is polluted with no prospect of the Master Scientist to put things right. Man suffers because his own Self and his happiness is still unexplored. It is incredible how the Self of man has been neglected. There is only Jung who made pioneer explorations in the world of science.

The electron microscope on the one hand and radio telescope on the other have ranged the manifested

material universe ; but that other immaterial universe of the mind, its composition, and the cargo it carries of thoughts, dreams, intuitions, concepts, ideologies, theories, surmises, postulates, hypotheses, imaginatios, fantasies, with its judgments and values, choices between compassion and destruction, loves and hates, rights and wrongs, its strange powers of communication, its insights into the future, of memory, curiosity, joys and sorrows, of all this rich treasure, which, though invisible is without any doubt the very heart of our being, and of the nature of being itself, and of our shared adventure along with the living whole in its infinite variety, its invisible yet recognizable character, of all this immaterial reality or invisible factuality, we humans collectively have made practically no progress in comparison with material explorations, discoveries and knowledge within the memory of the history of our species. Only the very few throughout the ages have been acclaimed as having some understanding and knowledge of all this hidden world, the interior ocean in which we live like fish, nearly all the time forgetting its importance at least as much as the universe we perceive as physical actuality.

A Spiritual Laboratory

From the writings of the sages everywhere we have a rich store of guidance concerning the hideen world of the Self. These astronauts of the spirit show us the way to Self-understanding, and how to reach that undiscovered, mysterious Self. They have shown how to set out in this quest, the nature of the subject, and what has to be rigorously left aside, the rejection of the irrelevant, and the disciplines which belong to this Science of the Self.

When we begin the exploration of the Self, we cross over from the relative world of activity and flux, and temporarily, we have to put aside, by an effort of the will, the whole material, sensuous world. This is done in the same way as the material physicist puts aside the immaterial or spiritual, tries to explore without the intrusion of the experimenter. Later, when both disciplines, the physicist's and the metaphysicist's, have been gone through, the material and the immaterial discoveries can be correlated, fitted together and treated with neutral unity.

What is needed is the setting up of a spiritual workshop or laboratory in our own mind, as far as it is possible. The two parts of reality require each their own methods of discovery and investigation, which should not be mixed up, for it is just as wrong to expect the physicist to admit the presence of the metaphysical as it is to expect the metaphysician to use the tools of the physicist. To the physicist the facts, of the metaphysician are outside his terms of inquiry and reference, and this is equally so to the metaphysician for whom the facts of the physical side of life are beyond his terms of reference.

In all the writings and text-books of the scientists of the Self we find this distinction and necessary discrimination made between the two sets of reality, the perceptive and the conceptive, clearly noted and underlined.

Sankara for instance, very properly states that the world of action should be kept strictly apart from the world of contemplative understanding or knowledge, that *karma* and *jnana* should not be mixed, no *knrma-jnana-sammucchaya*. We cannot expect an artist to be bothered with the analysis of light, nor the optician to be bothered with aesthetics.

This appears simple and obvious but the mixing up goes on. The science of the Absolute alone can give value-judgments concerning both these sub-sciences, keeping each in its place but dealing equality to both.

In a simple way the genius of a recent wise man, Narayana Guru (1854–1928) the well-known *rishi* of Kerala, gave an instance of how such a laboratory of the spirit could be used to determine the fact of the untive nature of the Self, in the following two verses of his “One Hundred Verses of Self-instruction” (*Atmopadesha-satakam*) (Verses 10 and 11):

“Who sits there in the dark? Declare!” says one;
Whereupon another, himself intent to find out, in turn
Asks, on hearing the first: “Who may you even be?”
For both the word of response is but one.

The repeated “I, I” contemplated from within
Is not many, but remains One; divergent egoity
Being multiple, with the totality of such

The Self-substance too, continuity assumes.

Notice the laboratory conditions. With the exception of speech and hearing all the senses are excluded. There is no light; the subjects are in the dark, no touch, smell of tasting, just the sound of each other’s questions.

The Self as the Greatest Value

The “I” or the Self is the single common factor as proved by this contemplative experiment. The apparently many are reduced to one—the “I” stands above the two voices. Each “I” refers to an Absolute. The claims of all the worlds of disparity to make for separateness are transcended. Thus an Absolute Constant is discovered and

proved. We can all repeat this experiment and reach the same conclusion, the same common result.

Bodies or concepts can come and go but the "I" remains, here, there and everywhere. The speaker is always the same "I" or Self. Its productions, reasonings, symbolisms and dreams may be varied throughout the whole course of a lifetime, but this Constant does not vary. It is the source-principle, the ever non-dual Absolute, called the One (*ta on* in Greek, *brahman* in Sanskrit). This Constant is the determinative standard or Value which can be applied to every possible situation in the changing field of the material or the psycho-physical complex which is the personal life. Even war cannot hurt the common "I". The Self cannot hurt the Self, though the personality can hurt the personality. But life should be revered because it is the mirror of the Self, and the Self once known will reverence all the manifestations of its emanation in the changing world we call "life" with its entrances and exits, its births and deaths, the million mirrors which reflect the One Face. Thus a natural ethic arises which is good for ever, beyond name-form-time-space and action. When every action is brought before the Self for sanction, there is peace and happiness at last. Every discovery must face this pure "I", and every invention, every ideology, every religion and every social formation can easily be judged as to whether it serves the non-dual One, the One here and the One there. My desire is right when it is also your desire. All separative barriers dissolve...all the frontiers from tribalisms to nationalisms are seen as errors due to the forgetting of the Self. There can be no value higher than this.

An Odd Situation

Why then, is this simple spiritual fact of the "I" not recognized? Why have so few been able to achieve this knowledge? The answer is because of the domination of the body and the world of action. The body is a part cut off from the whole. It is therefore assumed that the spirit is also cut off from the whole. There arises the notion of separate souls. Separation runs right through the whole psycho-physical complex right up to the "I" or Self; But as we mount higher or search more deeply the ideas of separateness dissolve. What is called in Jungian psychology the collective unconscious seems to be far greater than the little bit of consciousness which belongs to the individual. The invisible side of life ceases to parallel the separative life of the body. As we probe into the non-physical we discover that it is tremendously greater than the little fraction which constitutes our usual consciousness. As the same sage I have quoted said: "there are worlds within worlds." The strangeness of all this has been rediscovered by those who have taken hallucinatory drugs like Marijuana or LSD, They discover what they call inner space and unthought psychedelic realms.

When the "I" is pointed out its reasonableness cannot be denied. The contents it throws out or continuously normally projects or emanates are no longer confused with the Maker, the Absolute Self which (like the psychedelic experiencers) plays with world-making at all levels. That upon which all things hang in consciousness, itself beyond both consciousness and unconsciousness, that which depends upon no thing, but rather that upon which all things depend for their being and support, not itself being a thing.

among things, that which is the supreme "Thing" called "thing in itself," *das Ding in Sich* by Kant, appearing to be a nothing is recorded as a nothing and is confused with non-existence or nothingness, while the body-consciousness dominates in such proportion the Self appears to shrink. It is forgotten, ignored and reduced to a vanishing point. Daily life is concerned with very present "hard" actualities, but these disappear every night when we enter the inner space world of dream and the sense-free condition of sleep. Their nightly disappearance is a fact but this ontological process always goes unexplained.

But of course the Self will not be ignored. Though intuitions and symbolic presentations as in dreams the self presses upon the waking person, and so there arises the schizophrenic or splitting conflict which is a source of discomfort which runs right through the present condition of mankind. Giving full attention to the "I" or Self needs such great effort that with most of us, it is hardly ever even thought about.

This is a very odd situation which has been dealt with through the disciplines suggested by all Self-realized philosophers. further, as one invention and discovery after another is made by the scientists, the wonders they present tend to enlarge the power of the phenomenal. They hold our interest while still further shrinking the true source of wonder. As Socrates said, when we leave the wonderful things and ask what is wonder itself, we there and then begin to philosophise and become philosophers. (*Theatetus*, 155 D) The *Bhagavad Gita* also (ii-29) emphasizes Wonder as being the same as Absolute. It is wonder which gives value to all the marvels of science. They exist however, for the sake of the

Self and not *vice versa*.

Introversion

In India the name given to this increasing power of the phenomenal over the noumenal is called *maya*. The modern name would be *condittoning*. It is like being so absorbed in a movie that you forget it is just a shadow play devised by a clever producer, For the sake of enjoying this spread out infinite wonder, we have all this that we enjoy through the senses, including our bodies. As the *Katha Upanishad* (iv-1) puts it :

Outwards the Self-existent dug the holes (of the senses)
So that one looks outwards, not inwards ;
A certain wise man (however) seeking immortality,
Turned round the eye and saw the Self face to face.

This turning round of the eye is the beginning of the discipline of introversion. Plotinus (*Ennead* VI-ix-8) gives the analogy of a choir singing before a conductor :

It is not that the Supreme reaches out to us seeking our communion : we reach towards the Supreme ; it is we that become present. We are always before it : but we do not always look : thus a choir, singing set in due order about the conductor may turn away from that centre to which all should attend ; let us but face aright and it sings with beauty, present effectively. We are ever before the Supreme—cut off is utter dissolution ; we can no longer be—but we do not always attend : when we look our terms is attained ; this is rest ; this is the end of singing ill ; effectively before Him, we lift a choral song full of God.

Evelyn Underhill, in her great study of the world's mystics (*Mysticism*, Meridian, NYC 1955) devotes two chapters to introversion which she describes as the characteristic mystic art. Introversion or contemplation "is an extreme form of that withdrawal of attention from the external world and total dedication of the mind which also, in various degrees and ways, conditions the creative activity of musician, painter and poet; releasing the faculty by which he can apprehend the Good and Beautiful, and enter into communion with the Real."

Atmavidya and Brahavidya

It is possible to attain the Term (as Plotinus calls Self-realization) alone, but it would be foolish to refuse the advice of the great guides of humanity in understanding the way, the discipline and the techniques of diverse kinds suited to the temperament of each seeker. If a living guide or guru is available, all the better; indeed it is the best. One of the major obstacles to Self-discovery is the absence of living gurus, far more in the West than the East. It is this lack which sends Western seekers to the East and to India particularly. The need of the Western seeker for a guide has of late encouraged the setting up in Europe, America, Australia and elsewhere in the modern world, of centres of yoga study as well as of rather peculiar Hindu religious cults, and of course there are now many Buddhist centres, including a Tibetan lamassery in Dumfries in Scotland. Whether many of these yoga centres etc., (I have a list of 300 addresses of such centres all over the world) are spurious or wrongly directed is not the point. They fill a vacuum which is there and if the best doesn't fill

it, then the secondrate does. Even in India authentic guru guides are rare. There is a definite human need indicated by this universal interest which has gained momentum astonishingly in the last five years. What all this indicates very emphatically, is a deep human need inside the citadels of the materialistic establishments.

When the Self (*atman*) revels itself in its primal nature as the Absolute Constant and, being Absolute is therefore identical with the universal or cosmic Absolute (*brahman*)—and of course there cannot be more than one Absolute, as more than one would be a contradiction, each would cancel the other out—the whole simple essence of all the texts of the *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gita* and other works, is at once understood, as summed-up in the wisdom axioms called the Great Sayings (*mahaa-vaakyah*) such as “I am Absolute” (*aham brahmanasmi* “That thou art” (*Tat tvam asi*). etc. The too, we have an Absolute Reference for all things, for all systems of human society, inclusive of morality and ethics. We have also a principle which puts into order all the separate branches of art and science and religion, and in agreement with their individual disciplines.

Thus a science of the Self (*armavidya*) becomes identical with a science of the Absolute (*brahmavidya*), just as the *atma* is the same as *brahman*, the one deriving its name from the inward approach, the other from its outward manifestation, the one psychological and the other cosmological, using these terms in their widest sense.

The Religious objection

The basic question now is how such a simple solution, trimmed down to its simplest form, is to be presented for

study or observation as a legitimate fact. A strange paradox arises here. We might imagine that this Self as Absolute would be immediately supported by the religious bodies. Unfortunately it is the religious who raise the greatest objections. The reason is that they refuse to strip themselves of doctrines, concepts, dogmas and what might be called holy impediments. Unite apart from the dogmatic religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam which are icebound, we see this in otherwise tolerant Indian religion also. Texts dealing with *brahmanvidya* such as the *Bhagavad Gita* are quite clear about the character of Vedism and deal with it with gentle irony. For example (Bh. G, ii. 42-46):

Such flowery speech as uttered by the foolish adhering to the doctrine of the Veda, negating any other doctrine, the self of which is nothing but desire-made, holding heaven for highest goal, offering only birth as the result of works abounding in many special rites which aim at enjoyment and domination: in the case of those whose minds are under the sway of such teachings, who are attached to enjoyment and domination, a well-founded reason does not come under the sway of the peace of contemplation (*somaadhi*).

The Veda treats of matters related to the three *gunas* (modalities of nature); you should be free from these three modalities of nature, Arjuna; free from the pairs of opposites (i.e. without duality. established ever in pure being (in the true), free from either uniting with or not uniting with (anything)—Self-filled (or Self-possessed)

There would be as much use for all the Vedas

to a brahmin of wisdom as there would be for a pool of water when a full flood of water prevails over all.

To compare religions with old wells in a place covered with water states the position exactly. Religions become unnecessary encumbrances for the knower of the Self Absolute. This supersession of the gods is referred to in the *Upanishads*; men are the cattle of the gods, adoration being the milk on which the gods live. If a man seeks a *Brahmavadin* and worships him, this for the gods is as if their cattle were stolen. Religions have to close down or open up their closed ways. There cannot be any final dogma. The mystics or absolutist seekers of Christianity and Islam knew this and were persecuted for daring to say they were identical with God on common ground.

This science of the Absolute further withdraws itself from any kind of separativeness, from all taboos, from the sense of sin or holiness; here are no sheep and goats, and a withdrawal from all obligations and religious customs, orthodox or hetedox. This made plain enough in the *Bhagavad Gita* (v-18) which says :

(In regard to) a brahmin endowed with learning or humility, a cow, an elephant, and even a dog, as also one who cooks dog (for food), the well-informed ones (*panditaah*) see the same with no difference.

The same work (xv-1-4), compares the whole phenomenal world to a holy fig tree "whose leaves" it says. "are the-metrical Vedic hymns". This whole tree, the Guru Krishna tells Arjuna, is to be cut down with the weapon of non-attachment.

A New Science of Sciences

A new science is called for, a science of sciences which should be the same as a revalued philosophy is a debased word. As Wilhelm Windelband points out in his introduction to *A History of Philosophy*, the German word *Wissenschaft* has much greater compass than the English and French "science." It means the "methodical work of thought, through which we are to know that which 'is', individual 'philosophies' and the particular sciences in which individual realms of the existent are to be investigated and known."

This, he says, is the meaning philosophy had for the ancient Greeks. We can shift our understanding of what he means to India and see that each science each *Vidya*, represents a vision of reality (*darshana*) while *brahmavidya* or the science of the Absolute is not a *darshana*, not a "philosophy" or world view (*Weltanschauung*). *Brahmavidya* then, is the art of relating all sciences, art and philosophies, all doctrines and views, to the Absolute Self. The science of the Self (*atmavidya*) will cover the way to Self knowledge of the methodology, while the science of the Absolute (*brahmavidya*) puts in order all the knowledge-systems or the epistemology. Joining these two or working with the hand in hand, there emerges the axiology or science of values. Thus all the various sources and statements regarding human understanding become unified under one Royal science or *raja-vidya* as described in the ninth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*. And, as the next chapter shows, from, this stems out all the values we find in the cosmos, inclusive of the inner cosmos. Thus everything is unified and orderly.

The world's situation today demands this untification of all the arts and sciences, religions and philosophies. Whatever we examine—politics, education, government, physics, art religion, laws, manners and morals—are seen to move in closed compartments, full of rival claims and morals—are seen to move closed compartments, full of rival claims and discord. Even within each of these classes there are sectarian splits. Only a wise man who has the secret of unitive understanding, the secret of the Royal Science, the secret which is the Self or Absolute, can attempt the unification of all this jostling, clamorous set of rival claimants for attention and preference. But, having a non-dual approach, and armed with that axe of discrimination mentioned in the *Bhagavad Gita*, he can determine which the One Self Absolute, and can cut down the save what agrees. And then, to use Plotinus' beautiful analogy, he can get the whole choir of arts, sciences and human values singing in harmonious unity. The unruly mob of sorcerer's apprentices need the discipline of the Master Magician.

World Unified by Electronics

As far as physical science is concerned, the outer world is already unified. Anyone anywhere in the world who has a good transistor set can listen to anyone of a thousad broadcasting stations in every language from every country today. Jet Planes have abolished space and the separative nonsense of "independent sovereign states." What remains is the correlation of physical unity with mind unity. As we have explained this is possible when the knower of both the physical and the mental is recognized as the supreme principle whose one function is the preservation

and welfare of every individual as well as for the welfare of the whole. Nor is this limited to the human species, but inclusive of the totality of nature, not only treating the human with sameness, but dogs and elephants and omitting nothing, even covering what we call the inanimate. Indeed with the increasing pollution of the Earth, it is most vitally important to treat the Earth as a living organic whole, not to have its balance of life or ecology disturbed.

The expert in this Royal Science will address the fresh minds of youth rather than the fixed minds of the old. Youth today is a new element in the situation. In trying to find out why the young people called hippies, flower people or dropouts have abandoned their society, their schools and colleges, their jobs and homes, is it not because they have lost faith completely with a world which is valueless to them? At the beginning of this essay I mentioned the world-transforming achievements of the scientists. The youth of today regard it all as horrible and lacking in value. World unifying modern communications are used propaganda, thermo-nuclear knowledge is used for making ultimate weapons of total destruction, and then there are such other horrors as biological weapons, germ warfare and deadly nerve-gases. While all these things give good cause for refusal to co-operate within "civilization", advantage has been taken of the unification of the world through electronics, radio and television and jet aircraft, etc. but and this is important to recognize the young generation have only taken the *lesson* of world unity from these things. They don't want these things in themselves. They don't want the mechanized society and the city life that goes with it. Once its *message* as a medium has been understood, they are done with it.

They cannot stop it by votes or in any way other than by a sheer absolute boycott of the whole works. That is the important thing to grasp.

If the sorcerer's apprentice is not going to destroy the whole of life on Earth, this entire abuse of knowledge, at whatever cost, will have to be stopped. It is here that the *Brahmavadin* who is not a "holy man" but rather a disciplined lover of life, can come to the rescue. As the *Bhagavad-Gita* (ii. 40) says, "Even a little of such a way of life (the absolutist way) saves one from great apprehension" and this agrees with the statement in the Bible (*I Corinthians*, v-6): "a little leaven beaveneth the whole lump."

Not only the scientists but all the top people in the world in whose hands policies, laws, directives and government are placed (or grabbed!), are out of accord with the actual electronics-unified world of 1971. To borrow a Hegelian term, also employed by the Markists, the young people have become aware of this "inherent contradiction" between a way of thinking and the qualitative change which although it is all round the old people they fail to see it.

The change from one quality to another, its opposite, is part of the wisdom of all Self knowers. The Greeks called it *enantiodromia* and the Chinese the principle of the *yin yang*. Arnold Toynbee the historian recognized it as the principle of challenge and response. It is there in the Indian theory of the pairs of opposites, one belonging dialectically to the other, the *drandvah*. This is a principle running throughout nature, so it is imposible to stop it and in this way we may see humanity's greatest hope for the survival of life on this planet, in spite of all the deadly horrors.

Worlds in Conflict

To turn to the youth of today once more. What they are striking against is being separated artificially from the actual world of life. In schools and colleges they say they are in the boxed-in condition of the classroom, cut off from the actual world. They are made to study books which they say belong to a dead age, which have no relevance to a world which has gone beyond the printed book, for the printed book is one remove away from actuality and the current events in the world. They have been brought up in an electronic environment: in the television era, and television is always 24 hours ahead of what can be read about in newspapers the next day, making the newspaper totally out of date. As Marshall McLuhan tries to prove in his revolutionary writings and speeches, the kind of learning that existed through reading is already dead, having been replaced by actual participation in the event by television. Note that with McLuhan I am not specifying the quality of *what* is read or *what* is seen and heard on television, but the *fact* of these new *media* themselves. Newspapers are no longer newsbringers, the news is brought by radio first, the function, the new role of the printed word is now merely comment on events in which people as listeners or viewers have already participated.

This anachronism between two worlds, the separative world which ended twenty years ago with the advent of television and jet transport, and the world today of instant communication is fully understood by today's generation. Because of conditioned habit (the *maya* principle) the past generations, roughly those who are over thirty, are unable to adjust, thus producing what has been called the generation-

gap. In many ways this gap is also that ancient hiatus between the relative and the Absolute, between separativeness and unitive understanding.

It is therefore to the young that the absolutist should speak, and if the old are interested, they must return to their unconditioned youth and start all over again to learn a new way of life. That is all there is to it. The old must come out of their stuffy boxes.

An Absolutist Happening

Many hundreds of thousands of young people today have become dropouts because of being affected by the little bit of leaven of absolutism which changing times and instant participation in world affairs have brought about. Like the *sannyasin* they are withdrawn from relativistic society, while wandering with no idea of what values they are seeking. They wander everywhere in a way unknown to and hardly possible for former generations except the rich. They do not need to learn the full consequences of the new life which they have begun. We should leave aside the obviously ridiculous habits of most of them, their blatant promiscuity, their dirtiness and their defiant addiction to new drugs. All this may be part of a *social* emancipation that preceeds a possible spiritual one. Just as television should be recognized as a medium and not what it shows, so these young adults should be seen in their absolutist *trend*, and the conditions which have forced them to break away from an unliveable society. They are not to be judged by their individual behaviour. Between their present nowhere state and that of the *sannyasin* there is only the difference of a final aim. (And when it comes to that, how

many of the scruffy *sannyasins* in India today have fully realized the total implications of their absolutist status? *Sannyasins* in North India especially are drug takers, taking ganja. But that does not affect the status and importance of *Sannyasa* philosophically.)

When a young dropout girl offers a flower to a policeman with a gun, that is an absolutist gesture and it hardly matters what dress she is wearing or what her hairstyle may be. Here we must recognize the principle and not the specific instance. We may all talk about the need for a change in the pattern of life in modern civilization. Humans who do change are, however, invariably persecuted for their refusal to conform.

Here is the challenge of an absolutist happening, to be welcomed by knowers of the Self. The dropouts did not make the situation. It is the condition of the old society which has become so intolerable that it has produced the dropout and what we might call the "*sanyasi*-effect."

Facing the Dropout

What is the *Brahmavadin* or absolutist going to say to this audience of youth who, by discarding relativistic out-of-date values have opened-up themselves for the discovery of new values? Man cannot live without values or interests in life, and young adults who have broken away from tradition and who feel a breath of freedom and begin to break all the civilized rules, on the whole without hurting anybody, get just as tired with such unmentionable things as sex and drugs as they have with the trivial artificial values of the separative closed-in society.

I would say they must be first of all treated as equals.

No sincere dialogue is possible if the old are going to use the superior authoritarian approach, whether in philosophy or in anything else. There must be no double talk, no hypocrisy. The dropouts are highly conscious of truthfulness: they see through pretence. They are able to see through the presence of a bogus philosopher, guru or yogi. I need not give instances here. Some are well-known and have been widely publicized. Next there must be no introduction of new forms of establishmentarianism, a horrible word which describes an ugly thing—the squeezing of the individual into a fixed system. Then there must be no sheltering behind a smoke screen of Sanskrit words. Many dropouts have learnt Sanskrit. Then, only wisdom which has a non-dualist world basis should be presented. The Wisdom of the Self should not be presented as if it was meant to extol Hindu nationalism. Adequate and perfectly good parallel terms for philosophy are available in all modern languages. This means hard work for the transmitter if he happens to be Indian. So a world or mondial approach to all human life should be presented in keeping with the spiritual fact of the Self as ever-present everywhere. Then it should be clear that, while there is such a thing as saving life or “mankind”, the dropouts quite properly do not want to save any of the existing societies with their closed ways of life, which are called civilization. These fixed organizations with their tawdry values, their cheap entertainments, their war-basis, their separateness and their conventional religions are the very things which the dropouts have left. They must therefore be presented with the true spiritual picture—as humans linked together in one whole set of inhabitants on this planet, living closer than

ever before in sympathetic harmony and identity with the whole of nature as environment, with all forms of life and with all their fellow humans as integral parts of the whole. This does not need organization. What it needs is an act of unitive thinking with kindly mutual trust, The civilized man's opposition to nature will crumble away like the dirty crowded cities like some nightmare, which has been abandoned already by many of the dropouts who have set up their little communities in the countryside of the USA and Europe. Even if only two or three do so, it is valid as a nucleus of what is right and what may come.

Lastly, but perhaps most important, the centre of life for this new world will be the acceptance of the wise man, the true unitive absolutist world philosopher, who must be a fully dedicated person, either man or woman, who has renounced all active participation in community life and who is there as an absolute reference and as one who advises and solves individual and collective problems as they arise. Also he is one who passes down the tradition of simple Self-wisdom to the wisdom seekers who will succeed him. His virtue is his neutrality and in his absence of all desire to rule or to command, a human without possessions and without desire for property, fame, name, or authority.

Modern city life is bound to disappear because it is anti-absolutist and anti-nature, and full of the lowest possible values. This withering away will not, perhaps, be in our lifetime, but certainly in the years to come. The more the establishments oppose the thought and action of the absolutist generation, the greater the response by the new people and the greater the role they will play and the

greater their numbers will swell, now and in the generations to come.

Do what you like

The entire corpus of philosophy itself must alter its style and be constantly revalued in the light of both today's and tomorrow's history. It is both a challenge and an adventure of the spirit but wisdom will not die out. It was there long before there was such a thing as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Vedism or any of the names that have become tagged on to these specific formations. Indeed, the further we go back before civilization and city life, the nearer we come to the true man (as the *Tao Tehkhing* calls him). The *Brahmavadin* or absoulrist has transcended these names. The Buddha, Jesus, Ramakrishna, Ramana Maharshi and Narayana Guru are beyond their historical names and beyond the fixed organizations that grew out of their lives, their examples and their particular doctrines. In fact they all need to be rescued from their historical setting. As spokesmen for the Absolute Self as for the same Absolute in all things, they are always fresh and speak a time-transcending, history transcending common language, to the point, simple and without baffling the mind.

The aim of all true gurus was not to push through a creed or a doctrine, but simply to restore the priority of the Self and the principle called the Absolute, instinctively always present and later intuitively known, so that man becomes free and knows the kind of universe he lives in, so that he remains free and happy, and is no longer bound by the ups and downs, the joys and sorrows inescapably arising out of the fact of being tethered to a part of the whole

called the human body and personality. As the Absolutist guru Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* tells Arjuna at the end of this Guru-sishya *samvada* or dialogue between a Guru and a seeker for wisdom declares (xviii-63) "Thus has wisdom more secret than all that is secret been declared to you by Me ; (critically) scrutinizing all, omitting nothing, do as you like."

This is open enough, and that is the message. Do what you like while remembering Me, the Absolute. If it is an interest in some deity, some religion, do as you like : if that is in harmony with the principle of the common non-dual Self, go ahead. There is no injunction, no imperative command to follow a code of law. Once the awareness of the Self is present, once the knowledge of the Absolute is there, and remembered—and, indeed this Source of all joy or *ananda*, once attained, cannot be forgotten, perfect freedom follows. Take to whatever way of life fits your temperament and is right for you (*svadharma*) and remember Me. Enjoy the world here, food, beauty, sex, what you will, but remember Me. Enter into social life or live like a hermit. You are safe as long as you remember the Self-Absolute. As the *Ashtavakra Gita* puts it to the disciple there: "Be happy; move happily" (*sukham bhava, sukham chara.*) The two worlds coalesce, the world within and the world without, the world of being and the world of action. Only when these two parts of the relative world are taken together (which is yoga) is there safety and well-being for mankind.

This is the answer to the troubled world of today lopsided in its action, with the world of being thrust out of sight and diminished. Being and action must be balanced,

a gain here being equalized (yoga) by a gain there. “Yoga is that which puts away suffering” is one of the definitions in the *Bhagavad Gita* (vi. 25) and “Yoga is intelligence in action” (ii. 50.) In such ways the *Brahmavadin* confronts the dropout, holding up the motto :

“Remember the Absolute Self and do as you please !”

WHY COMMUNICATION IS SO DIFFICULT

I believe, I am right in supposing *'The Brahmavadin'* to have the same purpose as Swami Vivekananda's when he went to Chicago in 1893 to bring the word of *Brahmayidya* to mankind. He spoke not only to Americans but to people in Europe, and not the least, to Indians. On this assumption, what follows will, I hope, have some relevance, with perhaps some shocks. Shocks are like what the Japanese Buddhists call koans. They are not meant to hurt, but to help us towards liberation and enlightenment.

As I scan his writings, I marvel at Swami Vivekananda's skill with words; at his immediate grasp of the telling phrase, at his genius, endowed with such a gift of communication and what is called, "audience participation."

He had the pure sparkling water of a totally dedicated and sympathetic mind. The fountain is still fresh. He does not date in essentials, even after a quarter of a century. The reason is that he was not only an artist, but that he and his subject were one.

In striking contrast to all this, I find the majority of 'spiritual' or philosophical writings in modern publications stale, repetitive, dull and boring. They don't seem to be intended to awaken an interest in this most glorious and highest, and plainest of all subjects—the liberation of mankind. Religion and nationalism, and philosophy are all mixed up into a mixture which makes you eough and choke. The writers seem to be totally withdrawn from the modern scene, and all talking to themselves or to people like themselves, repeating old cliches and never daring to be original.

True, it is all *maya* anyway, and in the end it may perhaps make little difference. But the personality of Vivekananda is itself enough to affect the dream of life, and able to transform it from a nightmare into a happier dream.

This carelessness and indifference about communication is not confined to India. In a recent letter, the head of a Buddhist Order in England tells me how excruciatingly dust-dry the various Buddhist Publications are. He writes to say he reads these periodicals "out of a sense of duty more than a pleasure."

The Questioning Spirit

What is this aridity due to? Such good intentions with such deplorable results. Mainly, I imagine, but of uncertainty in most cases an unenlightened approach. So the easy line is taken. It is safe to repeat, and then very often wrongly, what Sankaracharya has said or what Vivekananda said. You toe the line which has been toed too often, and all is safe. No risk, no new contribution to the subject. Is it because they might be found out if they were asked to forget the philosophical texts and to speak from the depths of their own heart? So you get this Vedanta or Buddhism, or Hinduism at secondhand, when you might very well and with greater profit, go directly to the original source-books.

Vivekananda put his own life, his own spiritual experience into his 'communications.' When he did quote from the texts, or what Sri Ramakrishna said, he did so to confirm as evidence of what he had already experienced, or he quoted in order to criticize and question. But criticism Dare we criticise the sacred Veda? Yes, indeed, for if you the writer don't criticise, then the reader will, and the art

of the writer is to be ahead of the critic. You might as well get there first !

Look how Vivekananda asked all the awkward questions of the Christian Heads of Churches. Or take the entire *Bhashyas* of Sankaracharya. They are polemical throughout, He invents his questioning *purva-pakshin*. Or again, as everybody in South India knows, the whole of Ramana Maharshi's message was in his *mahavakya*. "Who am I?"

The whole method of *Brahmavidya* is one of questioning, It means to grasp the subject completely. It means having clarity of mind, for it is only when your mind is clear and all doubts banished, it is only when this transparency of mind is present, that you are ready to communicate.

But communication needs further qualifications. It requires the art of expression. It requires the ability to hold the listener at the other end of the dialogue and to leave him room to share and participate in the dialogue. For there must always be a dialogue in the process of freedom or enlightenment. The *guru-sishya-samvada* must be there, even mentally if not physically. In the *Bhagavatam*, there is the *Avadhut* who had twenty-four teachers and who were not gurus in the usual sense at all, but they resulted in a self-teaching self-psychological experience.

What is the use of a *sishya* who asks no questions? Socrates takes up the statements of his disciples and subjects them to inquiry and drags questions out of them. Read here especially the *Theatetus*. The *Bhagavad Gita* is full of questions raised by Arjuna. Even before he becomes the disciple of Krishna in the first chapter of the *Gita*, three months. They get these things and think they are

Arjuna states his case in the form of doubts and questions. Krishna admits they are quite valid questions, not at all wrong. What is wrong is, that Arjuna is taking the part of a philosopher when he is still in fact, a Warrior or Kshatriya. It is not his criticism which is wrong, but the matter of double values, double loyalties.

Philosophical Pretension

It is continuous questioning which keeps a philosophy fresh and whole, just as exercise prevents the muscles from atrophy. My main charge, and what is wrong with all too much of public writing on Indian philosophy is that so much is atrophied or very near to it. It is like good milk gone sour, or it is childish and pappy, no food for a stalwart. We have either failed B.A.'s or old fuddy-buddy grandfathers who are unwanted or useless in society, in desperation taking to the ochre robe and transforming themselves into authorities under the protection of all the outer appurtenances of Sannyasa, shaven heads and all. They pretend to be great authorities and write a lot of rubbish, bad translations of texts, childish assessments of the world's wisest men, writing pages of commonplace, rubbish filled with a flow of Sanskrit. But inside, saw-dust. We, who profess some interest in the real thing, must raise our voices against such pretence, such arrogance, such despoliation and pollution of the truth. Everybody knows this is true. But nobody dares. If Vivekananda were alive, he would, I am sure. Everybody *pretendnig*. It is this pretence in Modern India which is the crime against spirituality. It is everywhere. People want nice comfortable systems and doctrines, a do-it-yourself kit in a speedy course lasting

enlightened. Such foolishness. A *Kali-yuga* indeed !

They go round their custom-made little cages in which they have locked themselves up and thrown away the key, like those poor lions you see at the zoo, who out of sheer boredom pace backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards in their narrow cages. They repeat *ad nauseum* the standard Vedanta cliches. They are aeroplanes that never leave the ground. The rope and the snake, the silver and mother of pearl, the man and the post, the space in the pot, the wave and the ocean. I could go on and on. In this space age, we have the cinema to illustrate how people get carried away by mere shadows on a screen, we have the theory of relativity, and man out in space where the sun never rises or sets. Why use unfamiliar analogies to people in Western countries who have never in their whole lives seen a snake, about mistaking a rope for a snake ?

But perhaps they are holy people who have never seen a movie. I don't believe it. In any case *Brahmavidya* is not holiness. The Great Lord who projects the drama of the cosmos is may be more with the audience honestly enjoying a sexy movie than these holier-than-thou pious individuals who also pretend to be sexless. Ramana Maharshi took the case of the cinema to illustrate how relative all the sense life is and how the mind can imagine anything and get away with it as gospel truth. When Narayana Guru for the first time saw electric light being switched on, he remarked that enlightenment was just like that. No steps, no stages but a sudden attainment, Our modern fuddy-duddies are incapable of giving us such direct and up to date analogies. What is the message ? Nobody can change the life-style of another. Each must drink their own medicine to use a still

valid old cliché. But don't get carried away by the mind and the senses. Look out for propaganda and build your defences. Brahmagyā here provides the know-how so that the demonic rulers of human society won't catch you. That is the message and not this exaggerated division of mankind into the spiritual and the secular is what the demonic people do, and it is dualism and not *advaita*.

Swami Vivekananda exposed the pretence of the Christian Americans to be so morally superior to Orientals. He wanted Indians to be men instead of weaklings, puppets and old gramophone records. He was like the Buddha who asked his disciples to beat the big drum of the *Dharma*. But of course, you must find the *Dharma* first! Jesus was not so gentle when he swore at the hypocritical pharisees who closely and minutely observed all the rules and ceremonies of the Jewish Religion, very much in the way many Brahmins do with Vedic rituals. Jesus called them snakes in the grass and other nasty names.

The Real Mission

In one of his talks, Swami Vivekananda said that every man is capable of receiving knowledge if it is imparted in his own language; but these old fogies and young npstarts who dare to write on the Art of all arts, have obviously no knowledge of Modern English and would still appear to be addressing people who were in their prime in 1910 or thereabouts. Send any of them overseas and they don't last more than a month or two in the modern world of TV. They may achieve temporary attention as a novelty value or as brief entertainment, enough to fill their pockets and return to India to enjoy themselves. They then create their

own systems, doctrines and Yoga which have nothing to do with anything belonging to any Indian tradition, let alone to Brahmaidya. They are little more than spiritual vampires and Rakshasas living on the good reputation of their betters.

So it is with all the exploiters of gullible, innocent humans. If it will attract tourists, and bring hard cash into the government treasury, then fill the dailies and weeklies of the world with alluring propaganda copy about the Land of the Yogis and Rishis. Come and visit the quaint temples! Meanwhile the actual inheritors of the true Rishis of old, the teachers of true philosophy, are neglected under the pretext that India is a secular state. What humbug!

India's millions of villagers who carry out the real traditions and the true gurus are never heard of. When Vivekananda spoke of the heed for Indians to awake to their own spiritual heritage, do you think for a moment he was addressing hard-core politicians and pretenders who have no use for such a heritage?

Vivekananda was not a 'Missionary' though he had a mission. His aim was not conversion, but its opposite. His aim was for freedom from all the conditionings of religions and the blind following of scriptures, in pretending to be holy while making profits out of the blood and toil of other humans. He praised the *Bhagavad Gita* but could not agree with what he felt to be interpolations. He dared to be critical of any text, sacred, traditional or secular. For instance, he disagreed with the Gita verse (III. 26):

“The person who is wise should not produce in the unwise who are attached to action, a disruption of their understanding; the one who is unified in wisdom should

cause others to enjoy all actions.”

What had Swami Vivekananda to say here? “I cannot believe, he said, “in the self-contradictory statement that light brings greater darkness...Enlightenment leading to confusion! Is it possible? Men are not bold enough to speak our broad truths, for fear of losing the respect of the people.”¹

Science has no Secrets

Further, he says: “A teacher who cannot convince others should weep on account of his inability to teach the people in their own language, instead of cursing them and dooming them to live in ignorance and superstition, setting up the plea that the higher knowledge is not for them. Speak out the turth boldly, without any fear that it will puzzle the weak. Men are selfish, they do not want others to come up to the same level of their knowledge for fear of losing their own privilege and prestige over others.”

You may recollect that the Buddha when he was dying, told Ananda and other disciples: “I have kept back nothing, Ananda. The Buddha is not a teacher with a closed fist.”

If wisdom is not for all, then it is not a true *Vidya*, a true science, for the mark of science is universality, without favourites. Real Science is sameness. and therefore, it is Yoga, and therefore. *Sankhya* and *Yoga* in the Gita are said to be the same.

The great Oriental Scholar, Max Muller agrees here

1. The Evils of Adhikarivada, p. 191, Part V, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Prabuddha Bharata Office, Almora, 1919).

with Swami Vivekananda. In a letter to Col. Olcott, the first President of the Theosophical Society, he wrote: "Madame Blavatsky was either deceived by others or carried away by her own imaginations. There is nothing esoteric in Buddhism...It is a religion for the people at large, for the poor, the suffering, the ill-treated. Buddha protests against the very idea of keeping anything secret." And about Hindu teaching, he was equally outspoken. In the Gifford Lectures, which he delivered at the University of Glasgow in 1892, when he was seventy, he declared:

"The more we become familiar with the ancient literature of the East, the less we find of Oriental Mysteries, of esoteric wisdom of Isis veiled or unveiled...It is quite true that the doctrine of the Upanishads is called *Rahasya*, that is, secret, but it is secret in one sense only, that is to say, no one was taught the Upanishads in ancient times, who had not passed through the previous discipline of the two stages of life, that of the student and that of the householder, or who had not decided from the first on leading a life of study and chastity...As to the study of Vedanta Sutras. I know of no restriction, particularly at a time when MSS had become more widely accessible, and when numerous commentaries and glosses enabled students to acquire a knowledge of this system of philosophy even by themselves. Nay, it is certainly curious that while the ordinary education and the study of the Veda was restricted to the three upper classes, we read again and again of members of the fourth class, mere shudras, shudras, sharing the knowledge of the Vedanta, and joining the rank of the mendicants or bhikshus."

Philosophy cannot be National

Another confusion and a contradiction is the nationalizing of philosophy. Here of course, one distinguishes between speaking of Indian or European Philosophy, and a philosophy merely there to give cultural pride to Europeans or Indians. Philosophies certainly have their backgrounds belonging to region and history, but one cannot be a true philosopher and emphasize historical and geographical cultural formations. It is like hanging the painting back to front, and admiring the fine texture of the canvas, and not the picture itself and its message. It is sad to record that the ideal of many Indians to emphasize the nation, invades the realm of philosophy which like science cannot favour any region, but is true because it stands above these background features and appeals to all who seek truth. I have a current example of this mistake before me. Swami Ram Tirtha writes in the June 1971 issue of *Hindu Vishva* :

“To realize God, have sannyasa spirit, i.e., entire renunciation of self-interest, making the little self absolutely at one with the great self of MOTHER INDIA.”

This is very patriotic but the contradiction must be obvious. To see it you have only to substitute the words ‘Mother India’ with the words ‘Mother China’, or ‘Mother Pakistan’, or ‘Mother Russia’, which is actually what is happening in the clashing fields of cultural rivalry. How can the Absolute have the favourite regions? How can it have national preferences or a special country? I would go so far as to say that even the cosmos with its billions of possible worlds is too little ever to contain the Absolute. It is the tragic myth of the Chosen People. The Absolute is not IN India, but India is IN the Absolute, which is quite a

different proposition. I do not say that in the magically emanated tree of this world, India has not been a lovely blossom. All I say is that to make this union with the spirit of India the final goal of the man seeking absolute liberation, is in the light of Brahmavidya, a childish political concept. An Absolutist cannot be a nationalist. Philosophy cannot be national.

There is this terrible problem of double loyalties present in India today—and present, in every country in the world. The instant communication achieved through radio and television has unified the world on one side, and on the other side, there are these obsolete ideas involving local patriotisms, nationalisms, the idea of independent nation states continuing to divide the solidarity of humanity. This double-take has split the loyalty of the people of the world. It poisons the judgement of both rulers and ruled everywhere. You cannot support both of these values at the same time; and there can surely be no doubt in the mind of any student of absolutist philosophy on which of these two sides the truth rests.

Such national 'Philosophies' propagated on the world scale in which we live today, whether we call ourselves Indians, Japanese, Americans, Brazilians, Germans, or other names are no better than the prejudiced party views of politicians inside any of these proud nation-states whose self-centred attitude blocks world unity. Wars result because of this division of the world into separate patriotic states.

To the 'Brahmavadin' even the unity of the human species is not enough. His unitive vision includes the whole of nature, the whole cosmos, dust and stars, dogs and trees, the sun and the whirling galaxies. This inter-related

indivisible unity of the WHOLE is now indeed, in a limited form, even accepted as a special science called Ecology. It has come to the attention of all people throughout the world today who feel concerned about the danger of pollution of land, sea and air, irrespective of national location. We have a World Conservation Year, and some effort to stem the thoughtlessness of greedy humans. It is parallel with the world empathy over the hunger of a child anywhere. When there is the suffering of any human, it is humanity to which the appeal goes forth and not to any single national block. To strip a forest in Canada or in India, or to pour waste into the rivers and oceans, or into the atmosphere, affects the whole world, and the whole world by being affected, is concerned. It is in terms of wholeness, which is the vision of the true yogi, that we should identify.

Don't Speak of Christian Europe

Again, there is a curious time-lag among Indians, and certain fixed ideas due to an out-of-date educational conditioning. I cannot blame the Indian for this, but the effect is there. And because it is there, it has to be taken into account in the study of communication and participation.

For example, there is the notion that Modern Western Civilization is Christian. The fact is that only one in seven calls himself a Christian, and then too, it is only lip-service. The Church authorities are so concerned with this decline in congregational attendance that they are frantically trying to bring together these centuries-old enemies, the Roman Catholics and the various heretical members of the Protestant Churches. This is the accumenical movement, symbolized by the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury embracing

the Roman Catholic Cardinal of Britain. This view of the West being Christian is like calling India a Moslem Country—for the proportion of Moslems in India is greater than that of professing Christians in the West. For all practical purposes such as philosophical discussion, Europe, USA, Russia and all modern states are materialistic, and godless.

So if you want to speak to the Westerner, you will only make him uncomfortable if you quote the Bible, which is a book, he no longer believes in. That good and pious scholar, Sri Radhakrishnan has a great knowledge of Christian Literature, and in works like his translations, and commentaries of the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, he quotes exhaustively from Christian source-books. But all this is sheer waste today. The present generation as well as their parents, are just not interested in this approach, any more than they are in Church Sermons. This is not just my view. J. B. Priestly, in his book, *Man and Time* says of Radhakrishnan, “(It is) almost as if he had given the authors of the *Upanishads* a few terms at Oxford.” If there is any religious movement in the Western World, it is towards Paganism, the Hare Krishna Movement, Witchcraft, far-out Buddhism of the Zen variety, and so forth. But definitely not Christian.

Another grave mistake which is due to the use of a Christian vocabulary, is that when translating the word *Brahman*, the word ‘God’ is substituted for the word ‘Absolute.’ To some, this will not make much difference, but its philosophical consequences are very important and deep. *Brahman* is not God; it is the Absolute Ground in which God (usually given for *Isvara*, or *Daiva* has its hypostatic existence.

The New Missonaries

Here I come to another weakness of present day attempts at communication. This is the usage of a religious rather than a properly philosophical language. I hasten to say that *Brahmavidya* is not *against* religion. On the other hand one cannot say that *Brahmavidya* is *for* religion. The Brahmadin regards all religions (and their substitutes or surrogates) as possible views of life that humans may hold. In this all-over sense, a Brahmadin also accepts all the possible views which extend outside those which are strictly 'religious.' Unlike Vedanta which is the highest *Darshana* of Indian Philosophy, *Brahmavidya* includes views which are atheistic. As some of you may know, the *Sarva-Darshana-Samgraha* the Compendium of all Philosophical Views of Madhava Acharya, begins with the Charvaka or materialist philosophy, as well as other godless *Darshna* such as the Sankhya and the Paniniya. *Brahmavidya* provides the thread on which all the different views are strung. The many views are the jewels which make up the necklace or the various flowers that make the garland.

Therefore, the Brahmadin, following in the steps of Swami Vivekananda, has a new situation to deal with, not the religious views of the 19th century, but the views which have arisen out of 20th century technological society—with Existentialism, Dialectical Materialism, Logical Positivism, and so forth. And what is more, the Missionaries of Marxism are a thousand times more numerous and successful than those of the dying Churches, in countries such as India. People like Radhakrishnan and so many others are just unqualified to deal with the arguments of these new missionaries. So you have the spread of these quite valid

Darshanas, with their numbers increasing, with results in Bengal, Kerala and so many other parts of India, and not only in India, but throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America, where the Che Guevara religion had its origin.

The Brahmavadin will not condemn these views for they are, within their own discipline and framework, perfectly respectable. What he has the task of showing, is that holding them together threads this unseen absolutist thread. This necessarily entails having a complete knowledge of these heretical modern philosophies. They have the ideal of human welfare as their general absolutist principle, and on that basis a fruitful dialogue should be possible.

The Drop-out World

I must briefly mention here the philosophical situation arising from the current phenomenon of the presence of that protest movement, the Drop-outs, with its revolutionary attitudes to social conventions, to schools and universities, to sex and morals, to work and religion, to militarism and politics. It is far from declining, far from being a mere fashion for wild kids. It grows in strength by the hundred thousand or more every year. It is entirely new for the modern world. It is not new for Asia, where every Sannyasin can be categorized as a religious or philosophical drop-out. It is the Arjuna situation. It tends towards the nihilistic rather than the anarchic *Darshana*. It is a philosophy of negation, consisting of a rejection of the entire social order inclusive of its established beliefs, values and whatever philosophies emerge for the support of modern society. Thus it rejects the Welfare State's Hedonism, as well as the Iron Heel Fascist-tending philosophy of Big

Business individualism, or the militant philosophy behind the monolithic Big State.

This drop-out attitude is one of nothingness. Its adherents are in limbo, but they prefer this negative freedom to that of the closed-in world of tradition. The language and thought of this multi-million-fold group certainly requires to be known to the Brahmavadin, who has the challenge of finding a medium of communication. This might very well begin by adopting a sympathetic compassion for their tragic situation, for despite their music and their youthful spirit, they are like refugees from what for them is a state worse than Hell. They are like the Jews looking for the Promised Land. They demand and evoke some response and the Brahmavadin is perhaps the only person who can adopt them and help them to find their values in life.

Many of them have taken to *Yoga* which is usually something of their own creation and not that of either Patanjali, or of the *Prasthanatraya*. Likewise they take to their own versions of Zen, Tantra with a heterogeneous fusion of various gods and Asiatic beliefs which are all mixed up, but which can be said to be a trend in an effort to find some expression for truth.

Many too, take to LSD and pot (Marijana). I have heard that Vivekananda at least once smoked a cigar. Ramana Maharshi loved coffee. Chinese and Japanese Gurus have made a ritual bout of tea. It is like the man in smog-filled dirty Birmingham who was asked why he took to drink. He replied, "because it is the shortest way-out of Birmingham." Drugs are an escape. The Brahmavadin is not a moralist. Some drop-outs go about naked. In

India, the Jaina Digambaras and the Hindu Avadhuts also go naked. And sex. The Absolute in the tenth chapter of the *Gita* is said to be Kandarpah, the Inflaming God of Erotics. Brahmavidya is not for goodie-goodie people. The loves of Krishna for the Gopis is shocking, if you read it from a certain angle, that is, if you are the shockable type.

It is no use offering the drop-outs the standard formulae. Most have walked and hitch-hiked as penniless as any Parivrajika Sannyasin or Sadhu for thousands of miles, and they have seen more of India than most of us in India. Hence they are not likely to be deceived by what they see and hear about so-called spirituality. Having penetrated to the rotten core of the Western apple, they are wary of the tempting exotic fruits offered to them by imitation swamis. They don't want doctrines. Fortunately there is this non-doctrinaire Brahmavidya which rises above all philosophies, religions, ideologies, beliefs and systems. It does, however, stand for a simple way of life, discarding all but the essentials in total unified harmony with nature. And there in the field of practical grass-root simplicity, the way to total renunciation could be easy for those to whom social security means nothing! Swami Vivekananda went to America with nothing. The drop-outs also end up in India with nothing. So many common grounds, so much a basis for a sympathetic dialogue!

Spiritual Entertainment

So much for the dialogue with the New West and its possible solutions. I turn now to 'Modern' India. From a philosophical point of view, nearly a quarter of century of political 'Freedom' has dished-up a situation which calls

for an Avatar.

Philosophy has become an entertainment for the bored inhabitants of cities. Plato raved against the Sophists, the 'Philosophers' who made a business out of lectures. Sankara (*Vivekachudumani*, 58) gently derides speeches with loud words and exposition of the Shastras and erudition as being personally enjoyable for the speaker but useless for liberation.

When you ask "What did the speaker have to say? What was his message?" The average member of the audience has nothing to reply. "It was a great success" —meaning there was a big crowd, the audience in their best silks, the speaker charming and eloquent; the hall fully decorated with festoons of flowers and brilliantly lit, etc. Does it matter what the lecturer had to say? Not a bit.

They all say they are troubled about the lack of religion, about the degeneration of morals. They hear of another Swami or Teacher and off they go again to listen to a repetition of what they have heard already. What can we call this but spiritual entertainment? It is a social pattern of behaviour, with a readymade run from start to finish.

The fact is that city life and the pursuit of a spiritual ideal are incompatible. Modern India needs a Vivekananda to expose its hypocrisy. Let us face it. The hundred cinemas in a City like Bangalore are the real temples of the Indian City-dweller, with more and more new cinemas being built all the time. And lotteries and races and sports. These are the true ideals which belong to the India of 1971. I don't condemn them, but I do point out, that to pursue these ends and at the same time to profess spirituality and religion is self-deception which

cannot be hid from any overseas visitor. It is all nonsense to follow two such opposed values. It is not that movies are 'bad' but that pretence is a crime against truth. City Indians pretending to be religious and spiritual is a bad joke. Better to say openly you love Kubera and Kama, the gods of wealth and pleasure, than to hurt yourself with the schizophrenia of split ends in life. Consider the advice of Shakespeare in *Hamlet* :

This above all ; to thine own self be true,
And it shall follow as the night that day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Who is Deceived ?

In the quest for liberation or truth, the first step is to be true at least to yourself. If you are seeking wealth, don't hid yourself you are seeking the economic welfare of others. If you are seeking entertainment, at least admit it to yourself. The great sickness of Indian City life is this split personality with opposing sets of values. It is also present with at least half the people who wear the *Kavi* dress of the Sannyasin. They are torn between trying to keep up appearances and their desires to enjoy social values. You cannot pursue both ends without terrible inner conflict and suffering.

This self-deception is at the bottom of the troubles of India as a whole. A government minister will open a new Buddhist Centre in the morning, and give his blessing to some new military outfit in the afternoon. He will praise the Upanishads where Prajapati says " Go forth and multiply," and then proceed to give his blessings to a Birth Control Clinic which has the killing of tomorrow's generation as its

purpose.

Why not be honest and say "Preparation for killing is necessary for a modern nation-state and Buddhism is out of place?" Or "This is 1971, and Prajapati is old hat. To hell with the Upanishads!" It would be honest and truthful and truthfulness of this kind is the beginning of wisdom. And then the Brahmavadin can face them and agree that they have every right to hold whatever views they like. The trouble is even they themselves don't know what views they stand for. It is this dichotomy in Indian life which leads to instability and disaster at both ends of the situation, the material end and the idealistic or spiritual end. This jumping about from one position to another is a mental disease. There is madness in the air, the very opposite of *Yoga*. It means pretence, humbug, and half-heartedness in the pursuit of *any* values. And finally how can Indians have a "Message for Mankind," when they raise nationalism to the highest degree as the greatest ideal to follow, and when they are at the same time so unsure of their own values?

Have you any doubt as to how Swami Vivekananda would cry out, how he would treat them, with what lashings, of scorn and derision? He would say today as he said eighty years ago, that he was not dealing with men, but with wishy-washy food-bags.

Look how quickly Gandhi's Message of Ahimsa and Village Structured Life has been put out of sight. His great disciple Vinobha Bhave is never mentioned in the newspapers. Gandhi has become just the leader of a quaint cult, with Ugly Statues and Gandhi Roads. He is a useful formality for foreign VIPs to make a public appearance, to lay insincere wreaths on his Samadhi and be photographed.

And then, a few hours later, they enter into consultations with ministers for the purchase of military hardware.

Before, charging away on a campaign to spiritualize the world, India's Augean Stables need cleaning, and the only way that can be done is by a Gangetic River of Truth to rush through the whole land and sweep away the muck.

A dialouge with the West? But how does one communicate with the City Indian, the "Educated" Indian. Usually it goes something like this:

City Indian: You're a Sannyasin?

Brahmavadin: That should be obvious.

CI.: Where do you come from?

B.: From God, beyond place and time.

CI: I mean where were you born?

B.: I have never been born.

CI: I mean what country do you come from?

B.: I heard you. More silly questions. Your question is all wrong.

CI.: In what way?

g.: What you want to know—and why on earth you should want to know such a trivial thing beats me—is where this body originated. It can be of no value or importance to you.

CI.: You stay in an Ashram?

B.: Yes.

CI.: What do you do?

B.: I try not to do anything on purpose. There is enough activity swirling around in the world without my wilfully adding to it. I don't suppose you've read that verse in the *Gita* which says that the fire of wisdom burns all action—*Karma*—to ashes.

CI.: What about Meditation ? What kinds of yogic exercises do you take ?

B.: *Yoga* is not an exercise. It's an experience, an attitude of mind. Exercises are for the body. *Yoga* is for the stilling of the mind.

CI.: But many people go in for various *Yogasanas*...

B.: They call that *Yoga*, perhaps because, it helps to equalise the functions of the body. But have you ever heard of any *Yoga Exercises* or *Asanas*, or breathings bringing enlightenment or liberation ? The one and the only *Yogasanas* Expert I have met made money out of it at a circus. But he was honest about it, so it was quite alright. It was harmless.

CI.: What do you teach, then ?

B.: How to rid yourself of "teaching ?" What is this teaching but just filling the mind with nonsense about things that take you far, far away from what is right and natural for a human being. What is right and natural is the *Grand Dharma*. If you consider it, surely you will see that if education and teaching made people wise, the world would be in a much happier state than it is, especially in the most developed and most educated countries in the world.

CI.: So you're against education ?

B.: I am neither for nor against anything. My business is to be like the Sun, to shine in my little human way the Sun does on so much a grander scale. I can protest now and then, and show how this way or that leads to such and such a result. In any case wilful deluded people insist on filling their minds with learned academic rubbish enough to make a cat delirious with

laughter. The constant immovable self which is beyond knowledge finds its access to this world blocked by the mind which is filled and packed tight in a solid mass of useless facts. Have you heard of the wise man who lived in China a few thousand years ago who put it quite simply ? He summed-up the case by saying: "Empty the mind and fill the belly : weaken the will and strengthen the bones." Nowadays everybody has choked mind and an empty belly.

CI. : But if we put away all our science we would become mere animals !

B. : Mere animals, indeed ! What conceit. Surely it is better to be a good animal rather than a bad animal like people living artificial lives in cities are today. Why do you despise animals and prefer mad demonic humans ? Until man takes animals and domesticates them and spoils their nature animals are far better than men. The animals have not ruined the earth. They don't pretend to be holy. They don't need religion and doctrines, rituals and prayers. They live their correct *Dharma*, their original nature. But man is a spoiled animal. That is the whole trouble.

CI. : You must excuse me. It is ten o'clock. I must go to the office.

B. : How sad ! What punishment for going to College. It's my time to go for a stroll in the fields. I am grateful to you that all this tedious small talk is over. Farewell, slave of the ledgers !

PAGAN HINDUISM IN THE WORLD TODAY

There is a simple notion held by many good people who are also simple, that fundamentally all religions are the same. Books such as *The Bible of the World* and *The Bible of Mankind* spread this belief. In these compilations attention is drawn to parallel passages culled from the world's scriptures to try to prove their identity. Then there are organizations like The Fellowship of Faiths. But its very existence would be unnecessary if all religions were the same. The best that can be imagined is that religions left each other alone, and left human beings in peace. It is nonsense to say that the proselytising religions are no different from those who leave people alone. Another gross misconception in these books is their use of the generic term "Bible" as applied to the scriptures of the non-Hebrew-based religions.

Hinduism has no *Bible*. It does have sacred texts, many of which are scientific text books (such as the *Sankhya Karika*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali, etc.) on understanding and wisdom. There is a vast quantity of Hindu texts dealing with meditation and self-inquiry on how to realize the Absolute and become an Immortal.

Hinduism has no creed. It has no one specific book which people can lay their hands on in court and swear by it to tell the truth, as is done in Christian Society's Courts with the *Bible*. Most Hindus have never even read the *Vedas*. There are many works that most Christians have never heard of, the universal *Tiru-kkural*, known to hundred million human beings in South India, as an example.

Hinduism is the only "open" religion (to use Bergson's phrase,) as distinct from the "closed" religions. You are either within their box or damned as a Pagan, a Heathen, an Infidel, a lost soul, a Kafir or a heretic.

Hinduism is a free attitude of life. No Hindu ever asks another what he believes. That would be as discourteous ask him intimate questions about his sex life.

This freedom is absent in the modern world; it is against the modern world trend where you are suspect if you do not conform, if you take more interest in self inquiry than in getting a job, and if you prefer wise gurus to politicians. Now it seems to me that this freedom is a very precious attitude and it should be of interest to present it and consider what future it has in our crazy world of wars, and particularly religious and ideological wars and other mental diseases.

That Hinduism, for all its basic simplicity remains a puzzle to modern people is also a fact. It is a puzzle to many Hindus themselves. That this is so quite clear from the first page of the Hindu Code. Lawyers need definitions, even of mysteries like Hinduism. Hinduism exists but how are you to describe a Hindu? Perhaps in the whole world there has never been such a curious definition as that which the modern law-makers dreamed of in describing a Hindu. Not being able to make a positive definition, they came up with a negative one. "A Hindu is not a Christian, not a Moslem, not a Parsi, not a Jaina, not a Buddhist, etc." Those who do know Indian mystical meditation books like the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* will no doubt remember what the Guru Yajnavalkya said about the Absolute Soul—"Neti, neti!" It is not this, not that!

And so, either consciously or otherwise, the compilers of the Hindu Code were applying to their religious legalities the indefinable character of Brahman or the Absolute, and so could only give an answer which belongs to the spirit of religious freedom, totally liberal and unattached to any specific belief, concept, doctrine, or systematized expression of faith. The modern scientific factual thinker is left as much at sea as ever!

Under the Black Dharmas

Once upon a time, in the West, this was not the case. All over the world, before people were all taught to be materialistic minded and “scientific” or pragmatic, there would have been no difficulty in understanding this Hindu point of view. Two thousand years ago, people outside India were also of a similar mind as Hindus.

But then an unfortunate thing happened in Europe. Instead of leaving people alone to worship the various Gods of their choice—whether belonging to the Divine Royal Families of Olympus, Apollo, Zeus, etc., or the Frenzied Shiva—like Dionysus, or Mithra, Vybele, etc., everybody by order had to worship Jesus. Those who refused could expect a bad time, including confiscation of their property, followed by the torture of the thumbscrew and the rack, life-long imprisonment in dark dungeons, and for very obstinate cases, cremation alive.

Europe had its philosophic centres, its *maths*, founded by gurus like Plato, Aristotle, Diogenes of Sinope, Pythagoras, etc. Most of them had been in existence for a thousand years. They were all closed, the heads were forbidden to lecture, and so, with their disciples, they fled from

Rome and Athens and Constantinople (then called Byzantium) and sought sanctuary in Persia which was then as Pagan as India. Some probably did go as far as India. All this happened 1400 years ago.

And then, a few centuries later, Islam was born, and these religious people followed the same ruthless pattern of intolerance and conversion with the sword.

There were, it is true, bold spirits within these theocracies who pleaded for tolerance and dared to interpret the *Bible* and the *Quran* with much forced ingenuity, in such a way that an opening could be made in these closed religious fortresses. Such daring individuals, calling themselves Christian Mystics or Islamic Sufis were quickly persecuted and hunted down and either made to follow the orthodox religious party line or find a rope round their neck. Most of them went underground or fled to more favourable regions.

Now there were two Big powers and they began wars with each other called Holy Crusades and Holy Jehads, which lasted for hundreds of years. As if this was not enough, there were sectarian divisions within both Christianity and Islam; Protestants against the Catholics in Western Europe, and Shias and Sunnis in the Western Asia. And so with blessings and blows the blood-bath went on, all in the name of holiness. Further, although both Christian and Moslem derived their beginnings from Jewish traditions and scriptures, they both persecuted the Jews for the simple reason that the Jews refused to recognize the claims of the followers of Jesus and Mohammed.

Anyone who believes that all religions are one, has not only not read all this atrocious history, he has not even read

the newspapers for some months. For if he did he would surely know that these fighting religions are still very much alive, still pursuing their black dharmas. The black dharma still goes on in Northern Ireland where the Protestants and Catholics are murdering each other day and night with such persistent ferocity that all the British forces of law and order, army and police, have not been able to stop them. It is the same in the Suez region where Arab Moslem and Israeli Jew are also warring with each other. And I need hardly point out that both Yahya Khan and Bhutto in Pakistan have called their attack on India a sacred war, a holy jehad. So much for these pestilential black dharmas. The one thing these religions have in common is war.

The Pagan World

In September 1893 at Chicago, a so-called Parliament of Religions was held. Like many others of its kind, including the Fellowship of Faiths, this was merely a platform where each speaker representing closed religions, could get up and talk away about the superiority of his religious organization. It was on that occasion that Swami Vivekananda had the difficult task of being a voice for the Hindu attitude which was without any organization. For the first time a thousand years the audience heard of a free religion which left people alone, which had nothing to defend except truth and the ascent of man towards self-realization. It was addressed to each individual and brushed aside organized belief as irrelevant. He spoke of revering all the efforts of individual human beings to reach to the Supreme Reality without interference with each other.

I call this Paganism or Hinduism, using the two terms

as more or less the same (you may recall that Nehru on several occasions called himself a Pagan). I use the word Pagan, because that was the name given to the ancient religious attitude by the Christians two thousand years ago, and it helps the Western reader to understand the Indian religious world.

Now it is only in India that the Pagan view persists on any considerable scale. There are little pockets of Paganism in North America, among the Red-Indians, and elsewhere, but not on the millionfold dimensions you find in India.

The founders of philosophical thought in the Western world were all Pagans in long lines of Guru succession from Pythagoras and Thales, to Parmenides, Zeno, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Antisthenes, Diogenes and hundreds of others, many of whose names are entirely unknown to professors of philosophy. They were all realized humans, just as in India you find long lines of Gurus, in *paramparyah* or spiritual ancestry, listed in the *Upanishads*.

These are the truly important historical persons, far superior to kings and rajas, but hardly known to the modern westernized professors of history in India who seem to be just as ignorant of all this glorious spiritual heritage as their colleagues in Europe and America.

The real crime in India in the eyes of the whole world today which is dominated by the intolerant religions or their surrogates, ideologies and political beliefs, is that Indians still hold to their Pagan Hinduism, and Paganism, driven out of Europe, still is as healthy here as ever it was. To the West and Modern China, India's spirituality and Paganism is intolerable. India is to them a heathen pleac full of superstitions, a disgrace in the modern world because

it has idols of the Gods, because it still upholds the sadhu, the sannyasin and the bhikku. It is where the sadhus are permitted to beg their food and are respected for doing what many other Hindus would like to do. Outside Asia and India particularly, such drop-outs and philosophical seekers would be forbidden to beg. They would be arrested as penniless vagrants and anti-social elements and would land up in Jail.

Hinduism is Paganism and thus there can be no "State religion." You cannot imagine a modern state with the motto over its note-paper LET THE ABSOLUTE PREVAIL. Victory for Truth is therefore the nearest the Indian could get, *Satyameva Jayate*. For behind all the multitudinous manifestations of faith in India, behind all the worship of many spiritual Gods or Powers, there is present the ineffable inexpressible Reality which is the Absolute, and at the same time That which is the Soul of man as it equally is of all that was is, and shall be, even beyond time, the Immortal, Imperishable, Eternal.

Escape from Delusion

Instead of seeking power in business and politics, the great goal and final trend of Hinduism is to escape from all this delusion in which men are ensnared. Instead of supporting the accumulation of dollars and gimmicks, the aim in Hinduism is renunciation, even to the renunciation of clothes. Indeeds, the name the ancient Greeks gave to the Indian wise men was Gymnosophists meaning the naked philosophers. And so, when the highest *dharma* of Pagan India has the ideal of despising riches and of total renunciation, it is little wonder that the followers of these other

dharmas based on quite opposite ends should regard it as the utmost heresy. This absolutist way of life is more than they can stand.

Today there may not be many practising Christians in the Western World, but it is inevitable because the linguistic conditioning of centuries is there, that Christian types of thinking should unconsciously exist. The idiom of the Church and the *Bible* remain.

Then there is total ignorance by most of what true Hinduism is. The scholars look at India with European Christian eyes. They take up the position and the view of Christian missionaries. Even Westernized "educated" Indians view Hinduism in this way. It is further a terrible irritant for Western members of bodies like the United Nations to hear Indians talking loftily about Hindu ethics or speaking from a taken-for-granted Hindu back-ground, while at the same time the nation-state called India has to wear the dress and behave like other nation-states.

A Religion which is Joyous

Because Hinduism is Pagan it is easier for the Westerner who wants to understand it, to go back to the pre-Christian and pre-Islamic world of Europe. It brings a joyous element into creative life. There is hardly a poet in the whole range of European literature who has not used Pagan stories of the Gods of ancient Greece and Rome. Go to Italian Dante, German Goethe, or to English Shakespeare or Milton, all well-known names, and you will find their work full of analogies and references to the ancient Pagan Gods. I do not mention those like Shelley or Holderlin who were wholeheartedly consciously Pagan in their

production. Whenever something happy had to be brought in, the poets failed to find it in Christianity. Instead they find it full of gloom and sin, misery and fear, sackcloth, ashes and hell-fire. Wherever you look for great art in Europe it is Pagan in origin. What is called the Italian Renaissance was a movement to revive the religious art world of the ancient Greeks within the world of the Church. Much of it was imitation, guesswork, and had to be done through the Church but this was a thin disguise—the inspiration throughout was Pagan. This rebirth of Pagan art began in the 15th century with the great names of Leonardo and Michelangelo. Much later, the German musician-dramatist Wagner did the same but far more freely, with the Scandinavian-Teutonic mythology, while in philosophy there was the outright work of Nietzsche. So whenever the human spirit in Europe needed full self-expression, it had to revolt against Christianity and turn to the Pagan world.

The rediscovered Pagan world of Europe, was much like Hinduism. It was a joyful world of festivals and happy celebrations. It also gave highest place to philosophers and students of wisdom. In Book V of his life of *Appollonius of Tyana* the important philosopher guru of the first century, there is an account of one of his disciples enjoying a joke and bursting out laughing over the crazy behaviour of the Roman Emperor Nero. There is, it is true, nothing in that, except that it took place *in a temple* to Hercules in Spain. Now it is just impossible to imagine anybody enjoying a joke and laughing in a church or mosque. But the temples of Greece were like those of India, places of happiness. In the temples of India, there were dances and joyous parties in honour of the Gods. There is nothing

like the grim and solemn atmosphere of a Christian church where if anything the emotions are those of misery, suffering and sorrow. In India the great God Shiva dances. A dancing God is utterly foreign to the grim Puritan religion which hates any sign of human happiness. Hinduism is a religion for happy people.

The Wonder which is the Absolute

There are many misguided people in India today who want to excuse their idolatry and who have been made to feel ashamed of their religion because they have been cowed down by Christian and Moslem missionaries. Idols like the phallic Shiva Lingam upset these missionaries, and Hindus also are made to feel ashamed.

I was once visited by a Christian missionary, who was shocked with a full-length picture of Ramana Maharshi because he was nude except for a kaupinam or G-string. She said "what an ugly picture !" Now this recent Indian realized man was famous for his sparkling radiance of countenance. She did not see with her own natural eyes, but only through the eyes of narrow bigots like Calvin, Luther, St. Paul and St. Augustine. God in the *Bible* had made Adam and Eve, know that sex and nudity was a sin, and that was the end of the matter.

Instead of being apologetic or ashamed of their religion Hindus should be doing as Vivekananda did on his visit to America ; exposing the pretensions of Christians in morality while at the same time presenting the natural morality which Pagans always had. Hindu apologists have accepted the idea of a monolithic jealous Jehovah or Allah as the ~~one and only God~~ and tried to pacify the missionaries with

the idea that Hinduism is also monotheistic. This is all wrong. The highest in Hinduism is the non-dual Absolute which is *not* monotheistic as often wrongly described.

The great elements are Gods, the Sun is a God, indeed the whole cosmos is packed with Gods, each of whom have their own nature to fulfil. They are all, however, contained within the wonder which is the Absolute. It is this Absolute or Brahman which is the Supreme Reality and which Indian scripture speaks of as being attainable by the sincere seeker. Such a seeker was Arjuna who is led to this revelation by his Guru Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, above all the relative world including its *dharma*s, its duties and moralities. This Absolute is everywhere. Complete freedom is presented throughout.

The Gods are not dismissed or abandoned even though they still are within the changing world of time. Whether angry Jehovah and the punishing Allah have their place among the divinities or the demons we may leave to the Supreme Intelligence Itself. Demonic men must have demonic Gods. Good and bad are also relative terms and can be accepted as belonging together. The glory of Hinduism is its necessary acceptance of all, with nothing left out. It includes the moralities and the immoralities, itself beyond such things, beyond fame and dishonour, beyond even being and non-being. It is beyond the nations of relative and absolute. It can only be experienced, by arriving at the unconditioned "state" i.e. deepest meditation, as a sheer Wonder (as described in the *Kena Upanishad* and the *Bhagavad Gita*).

Now we arrive at what really is common in faith to all men. It is this recognition of the wonderful (called in

Sanskrit *ascharya*), the desire to reach to, to realize, to take as one's own, this wonder is the one religion of all mankind which Narayana Guru spoke about. The same *Upanishad* just quoted likens it to the "Ah"! which spontaneously arises when you experience a very near and vivid flash of lightning. A German theologian, Rudolf Otto called in the numinous, a Latin word which means the mysterious, the sense of the holy, the awful or awesome, full of strangeness and sheer wonder. The cosmos is a wonder and the human soul is another wonder. No wonder that Socrates told his disciple that philosophy begins with wonder and you will find the same in Lao Tzu in the opening chapter where he wrote that where the wonder and mystery deepest, there is the secret of the Absolute (Tao).

To see the wonder of the Absolute always, the whole twenty-four hours, is yoga. It means becoming one with wonder itself. It is the result of constant meditation. It can only be expressed through song and other mad ways. It is divine intoxication, to be proposed by wonder and the Absolute. The Absolute is the eternal experience of all-out pure meditation.

Liberation gets the highest place

The wonderful Absolute is the touchstone by which the pure gold is distinguished from the base metal. The Rhineland mystics called it the Ground of God (*Gottesgrund*) and for thus daring to have reached and presented that Supreme Reality beyond the Christian Trinity and for declaring that all else than this divine ground was of merely trivial significance they were harassed and forced to submit to the Church.

Again quoting the *Kena Upanishad*, the Absolute is where speech and mind cannot go. Plato knew of this as you can read in his letters where he says he will never try to put the highest truth in writing because it cannot be done. It is beyond words. He also says that if it could be done he would be the first person to try and do it. Further he says that the *magnum opus* of the Guru-sishya relationship is to work together to achieve this experience of the Absolute, the Guru knowing the method and the way, and helping the disciple until like “the light flashing forth when a fire is kindled... it is born in the soul and straightaway nourishes itself.”

It should be clear that Hinduism is a religion in which the highest place is given to the idea of liberation of the individual from the relative and unreal on all levels—called *moksha*. It is usually achieved with the aid of a guru who is a Brahnavadin or knower of the Absolute. Such gurus today are veryvery rare to find. This break-through from the world of circular thought and concepts (of *samsara* and *sankacpo*) was also the aim of the Buddha, using the terminology of Hinduism and its meditation methods. But Buddhism later became just a shell of an organization, crystalizing into the formalism of institutionalism—going off the main rails of liberation and taking on such absurdities as the 22/ rules of Theravada. It is only in Japan that some fragments of the quest for enlightenment survive and Tibet had also (now probably gone) clear links with Indian Yoga and Tantra in the Kargyutpa which reached its peak with Milarepa. But the idea of the guru as a guide to liberation is still alive throughout India, even of the notion is abused by all sorts of charlatans. People have crude notions that the

guru gives enlightenment in some magical way. This of course is quite false. The guru is a spiritual guide, not some magician waving a magic wand. And instead of encouraging beliefs, his true aim is to get rid of them, even to the final extent of abolishing the very idea of guru and shishya.

The Importance of Tools

The wonderful and remarkable fact is that in India, Pagan Hinduism with the universal ideal of the guru guide to enlightenment should still flourish, despite being ringed round with aggressive forces out to destroy it. Hinduism still flourishes, still keeps on high the concept of the guru and the attainment of the Absolute. It has survived so many world forces during the last thousand years, Mughals, Christians and other ideologists armed with weapons and preachers, and all the materialism of the modern world, using all the modern media of communication to tell the Hindu he is a fool to worship idols and superstitions when he aims at deliverance from rebirth and the pains and problems of worldly social life. Ramana Maharshi had the answer when he referred to modern educations as "learned ignorance."

The average Indian—the villager—is a very simple, plain human, but he is also intelligent. It is his direct simple intelligence which has both preserved his religion and which at the same time has beaten and baffled all these opponents of his Pagan way of life. They come to India and see a multitude of Gods, holy rivers, mountains and even trees and animals, and they have no conception of the

presence of the numinous everywhere. After all, their *Bible* and *Quran* tell them these things are for exploitation by man (see the beginning of *Genesis*), and this conceit has of course resulted in worldwide pollution and destruction. In Western cathedrals you will find plaster statues of saints which are worshipped. You will find in one of the biggest black churches in Ghent a picture painted by Van Eyck called "Adoration of the Lamb." The followers of Islam worship black stone (supposed to be an ancient meteor) called the Kaaba. But these saints, lambs and stones, as well as the Holy River Jordan, and the name Christ itself which is Greek for the man who is annointed with holy oil, are just as idolatrous as anything found in India. Man needs representations and symbols. These express as near as is possible, the meaning of the Absolute because they are all numinous, all full of Wonder. The modern world has a place for electronic marvels, technological inventions which are marvellous. But there is no Wonder in them. A marvel which is understood is not the same as Wonder which can never be "explained."

But a Pagan religion such as Hinduism has never lost its numinous sense. It is a state of being in touch and communion with Absolute Reality. And that is the importance of idols. Shiva represents the mysterious wonder of the creation of living bodies and this is best symbolized by the symbol of the generative organs. There is nothing wrong or sinful in this. To treat this as evil or a sinful obscenity is to blame God or the Absolute for his own work. Again, like the ancient Gods of Greece, the Hindu's Gods are not merely masculine. They all have their feminine counterparts. Just as Jupiter has Juno, or

Mars his Venus, so Shiva has Parvathi, and so on with all the Hindu deities. Further the devotee can argue with the deity. But no-one has ever heard of anybody arguing with Jesus or with the divine dictator Jehovah. Conversation is limited to pleading prayers and grovelling resignation. The Hindu Gods are all within the cosmic law and they are bound by that law to pay attention to sincere humans who have taken to *tapas* or austerity.

Hypocrisy Escalates

In these days, fully committed Christians are as rare as capitalists in Russia or China. The cinema takes the place of the temple and the television set takes the place of the household shrine. Festivals such as Christmas are just wearisome opportunities for sending insincere cards and gifts, aided by the advertisers who encourage a spending spree. All this is well known and yet the farce goes on. Rulers still pretend. They are under the delusion of inhabiting a civilization that is Christian. They proclaim themselves to rule by the Grace of God or by constitutions which invoke God's name. This does not prevent them from an all-out policy of murder, assassination and wars on many fronts, military or mercantile, crushing all rivals with big business and big bombs. Peace marches alternate with compulsory war marches and displays under "balance of power" meant to frighten all rivals.

The hypocrisy of all this vaunted morality was evident eighty years ago when Vivekananda lashed them with his rhetoric. He said: "With all your brag and boasting, where has your Christianity succeeded without the sword? Yours is a religion preached in the name of luxury. It is all

hypocrisy that I have heard in this country,”

Eighty years ago. What of today? What scorn he would pour on the Western societies which have accelerated and intensified in frightfulness and horrors during the century following his words! Everywhere a scramble for power, with churches and BBC and Voice of America broadcasting carols and phoney sweetness, while all the time dirty diplomatic games go on. And what would he say about the car and truck-choked air-polluted cities, here in India as well as everywhere else? What would he say about the irreparable destruction of nature everywhere on all levels? What wry comments and comparisons would he make about world crime, of hi-jackers, the terrors of concentration camps, prison, riots, the double-talk of statesmen, the craving for excitement, violence in entertainment, sex in movies and in every advertisement? What would he say of the cornering of India by all the dark forces of modern civilization, supporting openly declared enemies of Paganism and Hinduism, aiding self-acclaimed dictators waging their “holy wars” against Hindu India whose only crime is Hinduism? And what would he have to say about the Christmas Day special holy bombing in Viet-Nam?

You know full well the answer. You know too that he would side with the vast numbers of young people who refuse to be hoodwinked by all the lies and propaganda of the Establishments. His one answer to the whole hellish hypocrisy would be to have nothing to do with it, and to renounce the lot and seek new values. He might say to them. “Listen I have the answer to your problems. It is the Hindu point of view. Return to pure Paganism. You want to be free. Right! Right on! I give you the way to

freedom. It is the ancient Path. Possess nothing and you gain all ! Your ancestors and mine at one time had this in common. Let that good way return. Give it a new look ! Freedom is your birth-right. Stop being slaves. Be true and natural men and women ! Discover within your own Soul the values which are eternal ! Arise ! Wake-up ! All the rishis and the Absolute will give you strength."

Modern civilization is in fact the offspring of the Black Dharmas of the Hebrew-based religions. It is a religion for *asuras*, for demons, demonic throughout, a religion for spiritual weaklings. The great power-blocks who enthrall the world with thermo-nuclear weapons use spy systems like the CIA and their counterparts in all countries, with electronic devices and lies which are really the successors of the Christian confessional system which collects information, just as the concentration camps and police brutalities are the successors of the Holy Inquisition with all its hidden horrors, tortures and terrors. It is all a *damnosa hereditas*, a heritage of human ruin. The least contact with it is fatal to the human Soul. It makes immortal man a mortal slave.

Spiritual Haemophilia

It is so easy to be snared and caught by the Black Dharma which is Western religion and civilization. It can be done with the bribe of a job, with a Swiss watch or a transistor-set. I have met Indians in America whose lives are stuffed with such factory gadgets. Once Indians swallow this bait they are hooked and become the accomplices of this death-dealing, life-destroying way of murder and misery. They have sold their Immortal Souls for a Parker pen.

It is fairly well known to students of history that the

Romanoff Tsars of Russia suffered from a terrible disease called Haemophilia in which the blood refused to clot, so that any slight injury meant bleeding to death. Thousands of Hindus today who are educated have a disease which is akin to Haemophilia. We hear a lot about the brain-drain, but we rarely if ever hear of the spiritual leakage. It is a terrible thing to witness the draining away of a man's life-blood. But far, far worse is the draining away of all spiritual values which results in spiritual haemophilia.

This worship of dollars and factory luxuries is the greatest enemy of human freedom ever known in history. People have always wanted riches, lands and jewels—but there is a great difference today in the nature of these desires. In the ancient Pagan world it was possible to find philosophers and gurus. There was naked Diogenes who was asked by Alexander the Great what he could do for him. Diogenes who was having a sun bath, replied “You can stand aside, you are between me and the sun.” And even Croesus, the richest of all men of his time, listened to the sage Solon and benefited by his advice. Rich people did not destroy temples or interfere with people's beliefs. But today the rulers of modern society say you must worship the State, you must send your child to a brain-washing establishment called a school. It also frowns on you if you don't have a telephone which its secret informers can tap and see that you behave yourself. If you try to live a contemplative life then it will make it impossible for you by various kinds of harassment. No matter how remote a place you go to, it will find you out and make life impossible for you. This may seem a wild statement but it has been told me again and again by Americans, Australians and Swedish idealists who tried

to live a free life close to nature and independent of civilization, in their respective countries. There is no escape from the vulgarity and propaganda and interference of the "welfare" or "affluent" state.

The one exception here is India. On any suitable scale, only India remains a really free place where the true simple natural life can be led without molestation. It is the only place where you can meditate with safety, secure in the knowledge that you will be left alone. Here you can seek and discover the Absolute which brings self-enlightenment. India still has the climate of the Absolute.

Now this should be a matter of great concern to all people who think along these lines. You can also see why the name of India is suspect by the monster monolithic states called the Great Powers presumably Christian, and by the Moslem religious states, as well as the anti-religious and therefore anti-Hindu states of Russia and China and their satellites. India is surrounded by these demonic powers. They all know that the true Pagan, the true Hindu who has been nourished spiritually with the ideal of liberation, is not going to be easily enslaved by all their attractive tricks and toys. So in every subtle way the missionaries of the modern mind-manipulating mechanized states crawl over India with the open or hidden purpose of destroying the grand contemplative values of Pagan Hinduism.

World's most Numinous Symbol

The one singular symbol which takes numinous priority everywhere and which persists throughout Pagan India is the figure of the contemplative. This figure sits cross-legged and looks inwards, with half-closed or closed eyes.

With one exception, all the Gods of Hinduism look with wide open eyes. In this they are identical with the Gods of pre-Christian Europe who were always recognized because they had this unblinking vision. The single exception is Shiva whose eyes are usually half open.

This contemplative figure, typified usually with the image of the Buddha, is found all over Asia from prehistoric times. But it is not only in Asia that the contemplative cross-legged figure is found. You will find it also in the old Celtic statues. It is found in Celtic statues in France, Germany and Denmark. These are reputedly representations of Kernunos (called so by Julius Casear) from a word meaning "the Horned God" and equated with the Pagan religion of the Druids, the spiritual gurus of the Gauls and ancient Britons and Norsemen and Germans. The similarity of the figure found on the famous Gundestrop Silver Bowl with that of a seal found in pre-Aryan Mohenjo-daro has been often described. In both cases, in the cold region of the Baltic and in the warm region of the Indus Valley, this seated contemplative figure wears horns and is surrounded with wild animals—the name often given is that of a prehistoric Pasupati (Lord of the animals) Shiva. The only difference perhaps is that the Danish Druid Shiva wears trousers (because of the climate) while the Indian Forest Shiva is entirely naked.

In both cases we have the idea of the Yogi in meditation in the forest. These long antedate the historical Buddha. But whatever their antiquity may be, they all represent the symbolic ideogram, and as such, express a universal divine and human value. When modern people do a bit of cleaning-out from their minds of church and

state rubbish, it is not impossible to suggest that these primordial figures of the meditative man rise up into consciousness and give the impulse to take to this ancient path of meditation which belongs as much to the Europeans in their past as that which the same Yogi figures actually do today throughout India.

To the sensitive Soul even looking at these spiritual figures of whatever background, undoubtedly rouses a deep awareness of the numinous Absolute. The recent growth throughout the world of so many groups studying Yoga, and even the various witch cults where the powers of nature and the forest play a large role indicates the remembrance of long-forgotten spiritual facts and symbols.

Once again this is a Pagan experience, the endeavour to reach to the true and eternal by looking inwards instead of outwards. Here we are immeasurably far from the beliefs and dogmas of the organized religions. Instead we are in that realm of the *turiya*, the "fourth state" of *Manduka Upanishad*, where direct intuitional experience replaces all thought and brain knowledge; and if a parallel is needed in Pagan Europe, you will find the same end spoken of as "the flight of the alone to the Alone" (the Indian equivalent is *kaivalya*, Lonely union, the end of Yoga).

For as long as India has existed, this symbol and goal of the contemplative man has prevailed. It is the total opposite of the brash, frantic and noisy world of speed and greed, opposite to the deafening clangour of steel factories and roaring jet planes, and all that is conjured up by the phrase of William Blake nearly two hundred years ago, "the dark Satanic Mills." Instead you are in a world of peaceful sounds, of birds and trees and all the joy of pure elements,

which encourage rather than prevent the meditative life. This is the highest *dharma*, the Grand Dharma of Nature which the Buddha i said to have encouraged for man. All wrong or harmful dharmas are transcended and burnt by the symbolical "third eye" which is the same as absolutist vision, the *jnanachakshus* or Wisdom-Eye. It is likened to a fire because all attachment to things is consumed by the spiritual fire which sweeps through the entire psycho-physical organism. Man is freed from imprisonment in a changing world of mortality and activity. The restless mind is consumed and man reaches Nirvana realizing his true Self or Soul as the Immortal Absolute.

A Slaughter-House Christmas

When you reach that Yogic state which is Turiya, the Fourth, or known as Moksha, Samadhi, Kaivalya or Nirvana, one of the first fruits is a new vision of the cosmos. Everything is "alive" and all is one. There is no "living and non-living" pair. This means being kindly disposed to all, since the Self is truly "all this." Nirvana is all this when it is seen correctly with the new eye of realization. Made into a statement and labelled, this insight-outlook is called Hylozoism which is Greek for "Nature is alive." It is the concept that there is nothing "dead" in the whole universe. Dust and stars, cloud and tree, worm and grass, "all is alive". Thus kindness prevails and *ahimsa*, or non-killing its natural ethic. *Ahimsa* or non-killing is negative while its counterpart is a *karunya* or kindness.

Like true Hindus, the ancient ages of Pagan Europe, such as Pythagoras were vegetarian. Every Hindu knows that the High Gods would be disgusted with the spilling of blood.

But look at Christmas which is celebrated with an orgy of slaughtering of hundreds of millions of birds and animals. Turkeys, geese, ducks and chickens, lambs and calves are killed and eaten to the point of gluttonous nausea. Then there is drinking so much that for days afterwards every decent good Christian has a hangover for a week. The whole of Christian-based civilization inclusive of those who have never been inside a church in their life, makes this festival a slaughter-house shambles.

In her Christmas message recently broadcast, the British Queen said this Christmas spirit should be for all seasons and not only once a year. She was of course thinking only of the good-will which is supposed to be present at this time. But with what a thunderclap of terror this statement must have come to the fowls and sheep and cattle. If these beautiful vegetarian creatures could be heard by humans as they must be heard by the Pagan Pasupathi Shiva who has them in his care as much as human animals the first thing they would say would be: "Oh, Lord Shiva! Can you not save us from these terrible men and women? Can you not remove them off the face of the earth?"

The newcomer to India must be aware at once of the tameness of birds. In India, wild birds approach the Human in a way never seen in the bird-eating, animal-eating rest of the world. The wild birds of Christian civilized Europe and America avoid humans. That is to say if there are any birds or even butterflies at all. Quite apart from wild-life being hunted and killed for "sport", insecticides and fungicides have practically destroyed wild birds over whole countries.

A God Who Eats Babies

Wild creatures in India are not afraid of humans because hundreds of millions of Hindus are strict vegetarians. The existence of this reverence for life is something quite unique in the whole world. But it constitutes another reproach by those who do eat flesh. It is well known that people hate those who are more virtuous than themselves. People who are too good come to a sticky end. Socrates and even Jesus were killed because they were too good. Gandhi for the same reason met the same fate.

The very basis of the cruel Western religions is a God who wants blood sacrifices. He has even cannibalistic tastes. You can read in *Genesis* that Abraham, the Father of Jews, Christians and Muslims, was asked by God to offer his only son Isaac as a sacrifice. The story goes on to say that God was just tempting him and that he was eventually satisfied with the killing of a ram. And at the very centre of Christian dogma is the horrible sadistic sacrifice and suffering on the cross of God's own son. To any unbiased and sensitive soul who meditates on this life-eating God it must be revolting.

The spirit of Hinduism which I have been trying to present here has seldom been so well stated as by Narayan Guru, a great Yogi who lived in Kerala (1854-1928). He said :

“Don't you think that the animal called man is worse than the rest of the animals? The desires of the animals in the forest are safely controlled by natural instinct from all abnormal excesses. The elephant is simple and fat, and does not need tonics or treatment to keep it so. The

jackal hides in the woods all day and comes out only at night when all is quiet. It does not take much food—just a few fresh crabs, and the clear stream water to drink—and it is content. It enjoys its life with its nightly music, and you can see that it is none the worse for this sort of life—its neck is as plump and as glossy as a pillow. The animals have no exaggerated needs like man. Man torts about the earth as a veritable demon of destruction. As he marches he carries behind him a trail of devastation. He cuts down the trees and blasts and bleeds into paleness the green beauty of nature for the sake of the plantations and smoky towns and factories which his unbridled desires necessitate. Not content with the destruction on the surface, he tampers with the crust of the earth, making it weaker and weaker day by day; and he covers the surface with miles and miles of iron and coal. Man is terribly inconsistent. The State, which calls itself interested in humanity, would, for example, vehemently forbid even a man suffering from the worst form of skin disease to quite his miserable body. On the other hand, it will engage itself in wholesale mauslaughter, after due deliberation and in the holy name of altruism or religion. Man does not know what he does, although he prides himself on being more intelligent than the animals... Oh, this man! He must lay waste; his greed can be satisfied only by the taking away of life. Man knows not what he does. It would not have mattered if the effect of man's misdeeds struck its blow only at mankind. But the innocent monkeys and birds in the forest have to forfeit their peaceful life because of man."

Hinduism can never be national, but it does so happen that a happy blend of history and geography has preserved

this Pagan way of life from the remotest past right up to the present day in the region called India. Up to fifty or a hundred years ago, its recluses and contemplatives could easily find forest retreats far away from cities and human society. Now all that is changing, and while the aspiring Yogi can still find remote places and still find a sympathetic response from Hindus, the Yogic life under the pressures of opening-up of even the remotest jungles and lonely places on mountains, seems to call for special protection.

Hinduism is a personal religion, involving a personal discipline, known as Yoga. For this reason, it cannot ever be an organized religion. It does not need missionaries. The fame of its wise men and its naked philosophers is a historical fact in both Europe and China of three millenia ago. It probably existed long before we have this historical evidence. It would almost seem that God the Supreme or the Absolute had made India a holy land, a *punya bhumi* to be set aside as a nursery for Yogis. In a world full of darkness the light of the sages and Yogis shines bright to this day.

THE FUNCTION OF DARSHANA SYSTEMS IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

The Philosophic instrument of Darshana Systems is unique to India. It is of great service, not only when it is applied for settling academic disputes concerning which philosophic view should have primacy, but also, and above all, for providing the best device for reaching the goal of all philosophy, personal certitude.

Darshana comes from a Sanskrit root meaning to see. The nearest in English is "a philosophic view or vision." In German, there is the word *Weltanschauung*, meaning total world view. In ordinary usage in India, the word darshan is used for a direct face to face meeting or confrontation before someone or something. You are said to have the darshan of a king, a sage, a guru, etc. In the temple you can have the darshan of the deity or idol. And so, by extension the word means your own entire view or vision of life, of all that you follow or firmly believe in.

Under the Darshana System each philosophical darshan has its own validity, based upon its own frame of reference and discipline of inquiry, to be investigated and having its conclusion. This is not just eclecticism such as that of Victor Cousin. Relativistically, each darshan is true to itself, but in the final sense each is only a special way to the Absolute. Even what is regarded as the highest darshan, even Vedanta, still remains a darshan, and this is not the end of the individual search for enlightenment, though it may be the end of darshana investigation or probing. Whatever enlightenment is called, moksha, kaivalya, nir-

vana, etc., it is always beyond systematic reason or even mysticism. It is where, words do not enter in as the *Kena* Upanishad (1.3) and the *Isa* Upanishad (4) declare. The value of the darshana system is that it saves the seeker from the labour of losing himself in particular darshanas.

All philosophic views may be said to be expressions of Brahman, the Absolute. If they were without value they would not be held. One of the beautiful aspects of Pagan Indian Philosophy in its final form is its attitude of acceptance of all approaches as leading to self-understanding. When this grand principle is spread over the Hindu world, it manifests as that unique tolerance of all religions, views, doctrines and ideologies which has been the admiration of all discerning people such as Arnold Toynbee. It is a position which has never been accepted in the West since the arrival of Christianity, although it did exist in Europe in pre-Christian times.

Narayana Guru (1854-1928) once said there could be as many darshanas as there are human beings, and so there was no need to quarrel about religious or philosophical views. Sectarianism is a feature of all religions and ideologies. Communism varies from place to place, Russian, Chinese, Cuban, etc. The best brains of Britain are stymied over the problem of the warring sects of Christians in Northern Ireland.

The Brahnavadin as darshana-arranger enters here into the picture of Indian philosophical life. He is able to recognize the often hidden absolute principle in all darshanas, feeble or strong, negative or positive, orthodox or heterodox, coarse or refined, limited or expansive, and for the sake of the seeker of truth, and within reasonable limits

of comprehension, gives himself the task of presenting what appears him to be a representative selection of the most common darshanas.

It must be emphasized that these darshanas presented in a graded system by the absolutist, are not just for intellectual interest or display. They are brought together for purposes of ultimate unification and directed towards that final end which is the experience of the identity of the Self with the Absolute. It is here that philosophy and speculation in India differs widely from the more or less academic or from theologically biased aims of Western philosophy. The linking principle or *sutra* meaning thread which joins all darshanas and which gives them unity is the Absolute. What at first look like separate and even dialectically opposite views, are transformed under the skilful comment and arrangement of the Brahmavadin into a single systematic whole. The common value is there in each, a value expressed as happiness which is *ananda*, and that refers to the Absolute.

That this is so can be presumed from the statement in the *Bhagavad Gita* (V. 4—5):

“That Samkhya (the darshan of rational enumerative analysis of reality) and Yoga (the darshan of union with the universal) are distinct, only children say, not the scholars; one firmly grounded in either of them gains the result of both.

“That stance obtained by followers of the Samkhya is reached by the followers of the Yoga way also. Who sees Samkhya and Yoga as one, he (alone) sees.”

Therefore in every case in Indian philosophy where we have a group of different darshanas brought together there

is an underlying methodical unity. The treatment may be serial, paired or collectively united, but in every case the unity is there once you know to look for it. The Upanishads warn repeatedly against seeing diversity, for this results in misery and suffering. Seeing sameness may be hard but it is the only way to the solution of all problems, practical, theoretical, actual or virtual. Yoga is said to be the sameness (*samatvam yoga ucyate*) in the *Bhagavad Gita* (II. 48). The whole aim of the arrangers of the darshana systems is to prove the error of diversity. Therefore in Indian philosophy to use that cliché, "Unity in Diversity" is a mark of ignorance. But to acknowledge unity means abolishing all the dross of the darshanas while retaining the same pure gold in all.

Without a unifying principle there would merely be academic interest in presenting a collection of views. It would be just an unrelated disjunct assemblage. If they are to be considered, some principle of cohesion and purpose must be present, even when not implicitly stated. This is true of the four darshana sets which I shall briefly review. Since all darshanas are relative, the unitive principle has to be non-relative, an absolute constant.

The four sets of darshanas now to be considered are—

(1) The *Bhagavad Gita* (The Lord's Song), traditionally composed by Vyasa. Vyasa can mean the name of a person, or "one who makes an arrangement," which fits in very well with the structure of the work. There are eighteen darshanas, each of them is called a Yoga, meaning, a unitive presentation.

(2) The *Sarva-Darshana-Samgraha* (All Darshanas held together) composed by Madhavacharya, a 14th

century head of the Sankara Math of Sringeri. In this case sixteen darshanas are brought together, described and treated from the position of a Brhmavadin. It is important to note that the Advaita Vedanta is also placed under the heading of a darshana. It begins with the hedonistic materialist darshana, one of the few accounts we have of this philosophy.¹

(3) The *Sad-Darshana* (Six Darshanas)—The traditional orthodox Vedanta scheme, whose history is unknown. Max Muller rather misleadingly called it the Six Systems of Indian Philosophy. It is one single system composed of six darshanas. A better name would be the Six-fold System.

(4) Finally there is the latest work on darshanas, called *Darashana Mala* (Garland of Darshanas) by Narayana Guru, in which ten philosophic positions are described.² This is an original work in which the most frequent kinds of inquiry into the nature of reality are covered without labelling them as the product of one other particular doctrine. It is closer to the *Bhagavad Gita* without the form of a Guru-Sishya Dialogue (*Samvada*). It is still closer to the Upanishads. The author not only knew his subject thoroughly, but was able to restate boldly the work of his predecessors without harming tradition.

Under the darshana principle there are philosophic approaches acceptable which are not regarded as philo-

1. *The Sarva-Darshana-Samgraha* by Madhava-acharya translated by E. B. Cowell and A. F. Gough, Trubner, London, 1894

2 Available in Sanskrit, from the Sri Narayana Dharma Sangham, Varkala, Kerala.

sophical in Western philosophy. Such are *Bhakti* (adoration), *Yoga* (unitive self-discipline), and *nirvana* (extinguishment of ego). To be able to align them with other patterns of philosophy must surely be a welcomed advantage for the seeker of truth. In the present century psychology has become a reputable science, even though the facts of the soul or mind cannot be dealt with by the disciplinary techniques or tools of the physical sciences. Indeed, Western philosophy has been dominated far too much by the dogmas and even tyranny of physical science as by its rival the dogmas of the Christian Church. Philosophical thinking and procedures suffered a grievous loss ever since Pagan Philosophy was outlawed by an edict of the Emperor Justinian in 529 A. D. Philosophy proper was split apart into scholastic polemics on one side and theological devotion to the dogmas of the Church on the other side. The only permitted darshan leading to salvation was that of the dogmatic church creed. *Bhakti* (adoration) became suspect by the free thinking philosophers of the 18th century and after, while the nearest to *Yoga* was in the ambiguous and suspect form of Chirstian Mysticism. The very idea of man being so presumptuous as to claim identity with God, or greater presumption still, with the Absoulte Ground of God, was damned by the Church as the greatest heresy, and treated as an absurdity by the successors of the scholastic philosophers. Hence the whole trend of Western philosophy has been severely limited by rationalistic atheism, weighted down by a built-in fear of being once again ensnared by Christian dogma.

Whereas for centuries in the West philosophy was a preparation for the religious life of the monastery, in India

it has been the reverse. In the West, philosophy was a way towards religion. In the East, religion has been a way towards personal philosophical enlightenment. The West could have innumerable "philosophies" but only one religion. In India, there could be innumerable religions but only one truth. Indians have never been afraid of sacrificing religion on the altar of truth. In Europe, truth has been butchered for the sake of religion.

This is the philosophic tragedy of Western man. Nearly a hundred years ago it was to the credit of Madame Blavatsky to have made popular as the motto of the Theosophical Society which she founded, the Great Saying "There is no Religion higher than Truth" (*satyat nasti paro dharmah*).

In the West, philosophical inquiry invariably ends up either in the negation of atheistic existentialism or in religion where the priest takes over; but in India religion leads into the inquiry concerning the nature of the Self and deliverance from the relative, with a Self-realized Guru as a guide for the seeker.

Now I turn to a brief survey of the four examples of the darshana systems, beginning with the *Bhagavad Gita* which is perhaps the most popular of all philosophic texts coming from the East.

This darshana arrangement is in the form of a philosophical dialogue (*samvada*) between Krishna as a Guru and Arjuna as a disciple. At the end of every chapter the sub-title of the whole work is thus stated :

"Thus (ends) in the Illustrious Lord's Song of the Upanishads in the Science of the Absolute, in the textbook of yoga, in the philosophical dialogue

between Sri Krishna and Arjuna..." (followed by the name and the number of the chapter-darshans).

The Guru Sri Krishna speaks as the mouthpiece of the Absolute. His position includes all possible darshanas, and yet, at the same time stands beyond them. Vyasa the author of the work uses the character of Arjuna as an all-round generalized disciple who takes up one darshana position after another. The only other alternative for Vyasa would have been to have used as many characters as there are chapters. Arjuna has to play many philosophical parts. The doubts and questions he raises lead on to one darshana after another. Each position or darshana being a complete vision, it is called in every case a Yoga. Swami Vivekananda dealt with four of these yogas in the *Gita*, namely, Karma, Jnana, Bhakti and Raja yogas. But here there are fourteen more, and eighteen altogether! Each position or darshana should be seen as a total or complete vision of the world, and because it is a unified whole, it deserves the name of a unity or yoga. Even in the first chapter it is legitimate to refer to it as a yoga of suffering, for Arjuna is flooded with mental agony.

The chapters, yogas or darshanas are as follows :

1. Arjuna Vishada Yoga (Unitive Vision of Despondency)
2. Samkhya Yoga (Unitive Vision of Spirit and Matter)
3. Karma Yoga (Unitive Vision of Necessary Activity)
4. Jnana Yoga (Unitive Vision of the Principle of Wisdom)
5. Karma-Samnyasa Yoga (Unitive Vision of Egoless Action)

6. Dhyana Yoga (Unitive Vision of Contemplation of the Absolute)
7. Jnana-Vijnana Yoga (Unitive Vision of Wisdom in Theory and Expression)
8. Akshara-Brahma Yoga (Unitive Vision of the Imperishable Absolute)
9. Raja-vidya Rajaguhya Yoga (Unitive Vision of the Royal Secret Science of the Absolute)
10. Vibhuti Yoga (Unitive Vision of the Glorious Value-Expressions of the Absolute)
11. Vishva-rupa-Darshana Yoga (Unitive Vision of the Universal Form or Deified Absolute)
12. Bhakti Yoga (Unitive Vision of Personal Adoration of the Absolute)
13. Kshetra-Kshetrajna-Vibhaga Yoga (Unitive Vision of Realizing the Distinction between the Phenomenal Field and the Knower of the Field)
14. Guna-traya-Vibhaga Yoga (Unitive Vision of Understanding the Distinct Nature of the Three Modes of Existence)
15. Purushottama Yoga (Unitive Vision of the Supreme God-Person)
16. Daivasura-Sampad-Vibhaga Yoga (Unitive Vision of the Distinction between Divine and Demonic Values)
17. Sraddha-traya-Vibhaga Yoga (Unitive Vision of the Distinction between the Three Patterns of Faith)
18. Samnyasa Yoga (Unitive Vision of what should be Renounced).

From first to last in these darshanas the undefineable Absolute is present : for without it there would be no mean-

ing, as each one would cancel out its opposite. Whether called Truth or God or happiness, whether in divine or demonic form, this absolute factor must be there to give value. Only this can unite the mental suffering of Arjuna with Krishna (II. 10) who, instead of comforting, smiles ! The *Bhagavad Gita* indeed refers to everything in the phenomenal world, inclusive of death and dissolution (*pralaya*) as "threaded as a classified series (*gana*) of precious gems on a string" (VII. 7).

The discussion from darshana to darshana finally ends with praise of the yogi, who as a true renouncer (*samnyasin*) acts according to nature without desiring the result of such action. The yogi is a relinquisher (*tyagi*) at the same time living fully as a person totally dedicated to the Absolute. As long as he has this affiliation, which means reverence for life, he can do what he likes. As he initiates no personal action, he is free from social virtues and vices (XVIII. 63-66). Although written against a background of both Vedic and pre-Vedic traditions, i. e., of both worship of gods and ancestors (*pitris*), it stands above these traditions, in fact, it condemns them, calling them old wells in a land flooded with water (II. 46). Krishna's advice is to cut down the whole tree of conditioning, Vedic leaves and songs included (XV. 1-4).

In much the same strain we find the *Sarva-Darshana-Samgraha* of Madhavacharya include both orthodox and heterodox doctrines and approaches to the Absolute. The collection he gathers together begins with the materialistic view and ends with that of Advaita Vedanta.

Each darshana is shown to have its basis in some high value springing from the principle of the Absolute. The

author points this out, giving final and highest place to the Advaitic position. In this there appears to be some prejudice, although in his foreword Madhavacharya concludes, "Who is not happy with a garland strung of various flowers?" This is much like the simile of the string of jewels referred to as we have seen in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Madhavacharya's flower garland simile is used by Narayana Guru six hundred years later. *The Compendium of All Darshanas* of Madhavacharya is as follows :

1. Charvaka Darshana (Sweet-tongued Vision of Reality. Hedonism as an absolute value)—Founder or exponent is Brihaspati.
2. Buddha Darshana (Nirvana as a desirable absolute end to suffering. This view of reality includes the four sects of Buddhism—the Vaibhashika, Sautrantika, Yogachara and Madhyamika)—Founder is the Buddha.
3. Jaina Darshana (Philosophic Vision of the Spiritual Victors. Attainment of immortality through cultivation of virtues such as *Ahimsa*—non-hurting—and by austerities)—Exponents are the various Tirthankaras.
4. Visishtadvaita Darshana (Vision of Qualified Non-duality: affiliation to a personal Absolute Vishnu as an absolute value)—Founder is Ramanuja.
5. Dvaita Darshana (Vision of Salvation by grace of Vishnu is Absolute)—Founder Madhva.
6. Pasupati Darshana (Vision of Union with Siva through knowledge, rites and austerities, collectively known as Tantra)—Founder or exponent,

is Nakulisa.

7. Saiva Darshana (Vision of Siva as the Universal Lord who rescues his devotees from the inherent evil, *mala*, *anava* and *karma* of maya)—Authority based on Agama revelation.
8. Pratyabhijna Darshana (Vision of Recognition of Siva and of the absolute nature of the Self)—Authorities Abhinavagupta and other Gurus.
9. Raseshvara Darshana (Vision of Attainment of an Immortal body through alchemical use of Mercury)—Authorities unknown.
10. Vaiseshika Darshana (Vision of Attainment of Truth by Means of Understanding the Characteristics of the Nine Permanent Substances)—Founder is Kanada.
11. Nyaya Darshana (Vision of Knowledge of the Real through Valid Logical Proof)—Founder is Gotama, otherwise called Akshapada.
12. Prachi or Purva Mimamsa Darshana (Vision of emancipation through Investigation of Ancient Vedic Injunctions)—Founder is Jaimini.
13. Panini Darshana (Vision of the Sanskrit Grammarian Panini; Philosophy of Semantics with the Absolute as *Sphota* or Meaning)—Founder is Jaimini.
14. Samkhya Darshana (Vision of Reality based on Dualistic Cosmological Analysis of the Principles of Existence)—Founder is Kapila.
15. Yoga Darshana (Vision of Attainment of Supreme lonely Union with the universal God through personal Disciplines)—Founder is Patanjali.

16. Advaita Vedanta Darshana (Attainment of Non, Dualistic Identity of Self—Atma, with the Absolute—*Brahman*)—Founder Badarayana and restated by Sankaracharya. This darshana is merely mentioned by name. Madhavacharya says it has been fully stated elsewhere.

Most of the “founders” given above had their teachers or gurus, whose names are mostly unknown. Some of those darshanas have relevance for current Western philosophers. The Panini Darshana for instance deals with semantics in relation to the Absolute, and has therefore much to offer to the Logical Positivists and the Philosophy of linguistics. They postulate a built-in hereditary factor which enables a child to learn a language; that is, to associate words with meanings. But what is meaning? Panini here goes right to the root by postulating the theory of *Sphota* which means “what bursts forth” to give meaning when a word is spoken and heard or written and read, or what distinguishes sense from nonsense, meaningful sound from meaningless noise. Panini shows there is no meaning in letters themselves. The letters GDO or arranged DGO or OGD in English as words convey no meaning but when written GOD or DOG meaning immediately “bursts forth.” Meaning comes from within and gives value to the letters. If the value came from the letters then any variant would suffice. So the value-principle is a general, universal and absolute source. The absolute source is latent and only comes into *Sphota* existence when activated by a word, just as electricity is latent until you press the switch, when its presence is seen in action as light-heat or sound, etc. Meaningless noise comes about

through short-circuiting. Narayana Guru once said that enlightenment was like switching on the electric light in a dark room. *At once* there is illumination. Likewise the word is lit up immediately by the Absolute as Meaning. In Mahayana Buddhism it is said that the Buddha playfully let fall a few words and thereafter followed all the confusions in Buddhism. In the Tao also it is said that the uttered word gave birth to the “ten thousand things.” In the Gospel of St. John in the New Testament we have the well known statement :

In the beginning the Word was.
And the Word was with God,
And the Word was God.
He was with God in the beginning.
All things came to be through him,
And without him not one came to be.³

The sense here surely is that Meaning (Word) and God (Absolute) are one, and that things, that is what are given names, flow out or burst out from the Self Absolute.

Meaning is always there waiting for expression. Plato in the *Ion* dialogue makes Socrates speak of giving a soul (or meaning value) to words ; and again in the *Meno* he shows how all knowledge is latent in the Self, even of “an ignorant illiterate” slave who is brought in to be questioned by Socrates to demonstrate the fact.

All of which goes to show that moderns such as Russell, Wittgenstein, Chomsky and Searle might have saved themselves much troublesome headaches and investigation by going to the old masters of philosophy.

Next I turn to the *Sad-Darshana* system. That the

3. *The Four Gospels*, translation by E. V. Rieu, Penguin, 1952.

Vedantins must have been responsible for its production is suggested by the fact that they identify the sixth or final darshana, the *Uttara Mimamsa* (later or concluding investigation) with Vedanta, and some even with *Brahmavidya* (Science of the Absolute) which is not a darshana at all. It is such knowledge as offers a good tool for all kinds of investigation. The technique of *Brahmavidya* is in the use of dialectics (in the original ancient Greek sense) which reconciles the opposites, enabling the philosopher to discover unity.

The *Sad-Darshna* or Six-fold System of Philosophic Views is arranged in three pairs as follows :

1st Pair : Nyaya and Vaiseshika

2nd Pair : Samkhya and Yoga

3rd Pair : Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa.

There is also here the presence of an orthodoxy, which excludes many of the darshanams we have already noticed in the *Sarva-Darshana-Samgraha*. The *Sad-Darshana* is sometimes called *astika* (sacred, traditional, orthodox), even if, as Professor Hirianna remarks in a footnote to his *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*.⁴ They are not all orthodox in the strict sense of the term. That is to say they are not all based on the Vedas, Kapila's Samkhya particularly.

Nyaya, Vaiseshika, Samkhya and Yoga have already been covered but the last pair, the *Purva* and *Uttara Mimamsa* need a little clarification. Jaimini's *Purva Mimamsa* (Earlier Examination) is intended to defend, from an absolutist point of view, the validity of *Sanatana Dharma* (the Eternal Right Way of Life) propounded by the

4. p. 183, Allen and Unwin, 1932.

Vedas. Most people are not seeking the final goal of absolute enlightenment. What has philosophy got for them? If they fail to get guidance from the philosophers, they will get it from others with depelorable results. But through the word of the Vedas for such Hindus as have a Vedic background—they can follow a path which, though relative, will bring benefits, and will also enable those who are virtuous to seek the goal of final freedom. Thus there is a place for right action, including rituai, sacrifice, etc. in any complete Hindu philosophic methodology. Right action is therefore a necessary stage in the search for emancipation and enlightenment. Unless there is Veda, revealed knowledge, there cannot be Vedanta, which means what comes at the end (-*anta*) of Veda, just as it could be said you cannot speak of metaphysics without physics. Each person has his own background authorities, upon which he constructs his further philosophic research. The natural background of the *Sad-darshana* and of Vedanta included, is Vedic, and all the revaluation is a revaluation or even supercession of that Vedic background.

It is made quite clear by Sankaracharya in his introduction to his Commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*. There he says the Vedic Religion is two-fold—the *Pravritti Dharma* (Outward Active Path of Right Behaviour) and the *Nivritti Dharma* (Inward Non-Active Path of Right Behaviour). This Religion, therefore brings worldly prosperity and happinees and also leads on to emancipation. Thus, he says, “indirectly, the Way of Works (advocated in the *Purva Mimamsa*) is also a means to enlightenment.” It is true that he repeatedly says that the two paths or disciplines of *karma* (action) and *jnana* (wisdom) should not be mixed, but this is

not to deny the need for action, on the one hand action is for the welfare of society ; on the other hand it is for the purification of the Self with all action placed in the Absolute, quoting the *Bhagavad Gita* (V. 10-11).

Among those who are zealous for absolute freedom there is a tendency to dismiss the *Purva Mimamsa* and to concentrate on the *Uttara Mimamsa* (Latter Inquiry) whose subject is wisdom. But to do so and to exclude an important darshana would mean breaking the harmony of the carefully constructed Six-fold System. It is perhaps an understandable error to lift the *Uttara Mimamsa* out of its context and to forget that it too is just a darshana. In the end, *all* darshanas have to be abandoned. It is the task of the *Brahmavidya* teacher to bring his pupil to this final end.

Before leaving the *Sad-Darshana* a word or two about the *Uttara Mimamsa* is needed for clarification. This sixth philosophic vision is said to depend upon the authority of Badarayana's *Brahmasutras* (as well as upon the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, the three being known as the *Prasthanatraya* or Three-fold Exposition). Taken by themselves without the comments of either Sankara, Ramanuja or Madhva, the *sutras* themselves defy unaided comprehension. They are like shorthand notes, gnomic and obscure so that each of these classical commentators can interpret them and fill in the missing sense to agree with their own philosophic position. The seeker, fortunately, has the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita* and many other sources such as the various other *Gita* and *Puranas*, and so need not bother too much about this enigmatic original which is like a jigsaw with over half the pieces missing.

The fourth Darshana group is the *Darshana Mala*

(Garland of Philosophic Visions) of Narayana Guru. It was composed in 1916. It consists, of one hundred verses in Sanskrit, divided into ten chapters, each with ten verses. The Guru lifts the darshanas out of the personal context, carefully avoiding bringing in the name of this founder or that, or this school or the other. It is in the form of a personal inquiry into positions and speculations affecting the seeker, much in the way that the *Bhagavad Gita* does, but on a much purer and strictly philosophic manner. It is called the Garland of Flowers, no single flower being superior to its neighbour. The garland can be worn (made functional), admired (found useful by others), or discarded when the blossoms have faded (its purpose having been served). The ten darshanas are as follows :

1. Adhyaropa Darshana (Vision of Supposed, Mistaken Attribution)—Here the question, “How did all this come to be ?” is answered. Theories of creation or of evolution are rejected in favour of the Indian and Plotinian doctrine of immediate emanation. The Self, like a magician, through *maya* and the dark and bright powers, *tamas* and *taijas* (the *yin-yang* of Chinese philosophy) produces the manifested world “at one stroke.” The names of the cosmic self are variously called Brahma, Siva, Vishnu or the Ultimate, the Absolute.
2. Apavada Darshana (Vision of Non-Supposition, Refutation)—Cause and effect are illusory, again due to *maya*—all things are mind-produced, the mind itself being empty, and mind also equated with consciousness. The Absolute

is non-dual and shines in consciousness as pure joy (*ananda*).

3. Asatya Darshana (Vision of Non-Existence)—All is the presentiment of the will, and is as illusory as the rope thought to be a snake. The world is like a dream.
4. Maya Darshana (Vision of the Principle of Delusion, Negation)—Consciousness is the product of *maya* with its two sides of knowledge and ignorance, knowing and not-knowing, transcendence and immanence. It is nature and a wonder.
5. Bhana Darshana (Vision of Consciousness)—Consciousness can see multiplicity and separateness and difference, or it can see unity and sameness. It can be either gross having to do with sense activities, subtle, as in dreams and thinking, rational and reasoning, or intuitive when absorbed into the Absolute. But all consciousness is conditioned and on inquiry, unreal. What is unconditioned does not become conscious, and THAT is the Absolute.
6. Karma Darshana (Vision of Action)—All action is done by the *maya* of the Self-Absolute, the result of natural energies, even when we say "I act" or "I do not act." The wise remain outside of time and action.
7. Jnana Darshana (Vision of Knowledge)—Understanding, while singular, can be conditioned or unconditioned. The unconditioned understanding is free from egoism. Supreme wisdom is

where Self and Absolute are one with no willed action, with the Self as a mere witness.

- 8 Bhakti Darshana (Vision of Adoration)—Bhakti is contemplation of the Self which is the same as contemplation of the Absolute. The adoration of wife for husband and of husband for wife, for the Father of the World, the Guru, father and mother, and of all who stand for truth and those who follow the path of goodness, is *bhakti* in the manifested world, while adoration of the Absolute Self is supreme *bhakti*.
9. Yoga Darshana (Vision of Disciplined Unification)—Directing the mind constantly to the intelligent Self, restraining it from wilful desires, is yoga or unification. This can be done by the two-fold process of *jnana* (through knowledge) or by *karma* (through action), otherwise through reasoned mental restraint or by various physical means.
10. Nirvana Darshana (Vision of the Extinguishment of the Ego-flame)—The view or darshana here is that of the various grades of those who claim or, are said to have attained enlightenment. The lowest are those who desire *siddhis* or occult powers, the highest those who are free from all possibility of conditioning, totally cut off from all duality.

These darshanās are linked together by the principle of inquiry, into the real, beginning with how the universe came to be, and ending with total absorption of the self in the unconditioned Self itself. Causality is supposed

and infers a First Cause, God or Demi-urge. But this is relativistic. Then the world is seen as a dream, and this leads on to the principle of cosmic illusion or *maya*. On analysis consciousness is seen to be a projection of the will, but the Real must be without even this conditioning called consciousness. The entire manifested world of movement and action is seen as the product of *maya*, in which the actionless Self is deluded into thinking it acts. Under the next darshana, that of knowledge, two kinds are distinguishable, the relative and absolute. Reasoning in this way brings the seeker to a confrontation of the Absolute as a sheer adorable Wonder which in the form of essential value is everywhere, both in the world of human relationship, as well as in the non-dual Self. To reach and attain to this universal transcendent as well as immanent Self-Absolute brings the seeker to yoga, with its methods of using *mudras* and *asanas* and turning of the mind totally towards the unconditioned Self, until finally the goal of total emancipation or nirvana is reached. This goal, being beyond description, can only be dealt with by inferential analogy, by the way it demonstrably manifests in those who have claimed to reach it, or who are, by behaviour seen to have reached it. It is the end of all seeking. In Narayana Guru's own words :

“*heyopadeyata nahyasya-atma va svaprakasakah*”

(There is nothing here to be accepted or rejected : as for the Self, it is self-illuminating.)

WHAT SHALL I READ ?

The Book and the way

“ WHAT books do you recommend ? ” How often seekers of wisdom have asked me this question, and how hard it is to give an immediate answer. It is not that I am in doubt as to which are the great source books in philosophy. The difficulty is knowing whether the reader will be ready for them.

Take an ordinary instance. When I was eleven, my English teacher gave us *Julius Caesar*, followed by *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. We parsed the sentences and memorized the famous passages. What hateful agony it was, and just because we were not ready for Shakespeare? Leaving school, indeed, was almost synonymous with leaving this boring Shakespeare. It was many years before I found the real poet-dramatist.

I feel sure that if I had seen Shakespear acted in the live theatre, far away from the four prison walls of the school-room, I would have enjoyed him. I had no difficulty with Burns. Everybody in Scotland at least knew his songs. He was related to the people and to the countryside I knew. And so too with Shelley and Whitman. They had music and meaning. A knowledge of the multiplication table is not much good for understanding the mathematical theories of Russell, Einstein or Dirac.

You have to be ready : you need some preparation, the instinct to recognize and love the best. If this is true of ordinary studies, in art or physics, it is all the more true in what the experts insist is the science of all sciences, which

is one of the descriptions of Brahmanvidya and Philosophy. Another pitfall is charlatanism. Very few people would dare to pretend to know mathematics unless they did. In no time they would be found out. A simple algebraic problem would floor them and expose them. In philosophy it is more difficult to expose pretenders. But there are tests, as we shall see.

Are Words Useless ?

Then there is another problem. It concerns the very existence and validity of books. At the end of the road in the realm of wisdom books an enigmatic sphinx blocks the way. "Wait!" imperatively cries this monster, "before you go further you must solve the paradox about the uselessness of books for the attainment of truth".

The sphinx is right. Independently, Gurus such as Sankara, Plato and Lao Tzu, Indian, Greek and Chinese, despite having, themselves, written treasured works, have all at the same time shaken their heads about books being able to give you enlightenment.

Sankara is attributed with a whole shelf of books. The mind reels in absorbing his pedantry, trickiness with word-derivations. He and Kant have between them given more hair-splitting headache than any other philosophers I know of. And yet the same Sankara in his *Charpata-panjarika-stotram* (Verses on Being Caged or Free) declares that the worship of Krishna is superior to the study of grammar. And in his *Vivekachudamani* (Crowning Gem of Wisdom-Discrimination) verse 59 he outrightly dismisses all books *per se* :

"When unknown is the transcendant THATNESS,

reflection upon the authoritative texts is futile :

“And when known is the transcendant THATNESS, reflection upon the authoritative texts is (also) futile.”

In the verse that follows Sankara says the intelligence loses itself “wandering in the great jungle of word-magic” and that the seeker of wisdom should search instead for the understanding of the Self.

Plato another man of many words, agrees. In *Epistle VII* (341 C) he wrote :

“This knowledge (of the Self or enlightenment) is not something that can be put into words like other sciences, but comes only after long-continued intercourse between teacher and pupil.”

Lao Tzu opens his *Tao Te Ching* (Text on the Nature of the Absolute), which is a work of 5,000 ideograms, with the warning :

“The Tao (the absolute) in words is not the genuine Tao.”

You see the difficulty? Why then, did these Gurus write? At a noisy meeting a still noisier gavel is banged by the chairman in order to restore quiet. Likewise words are used to put an end to words. Shakespeare drew upon a common proverb when he wrote that one fire drives out one fire, one nail, one nail. In India the illustration is of one thorn used to extract another thorn. This is the negation of the negation. Writing which in other sciences would be a positive step, becomes here part of a negative process of discipline. Why should this be so ?

Dregs and Sediments

Something of an answer was given by the 3rd century

BC absolutist Guru Chuang Tse. He tells the story of an aged wheelwright who was diligently working at a wheel in the courtyard one day. Looking up, he observed his master the Duke, sitting on a balcony reading a book.

“What are you reading, Master?”, he enquired.

“An ancient book on philosophy,” the Duke replied.

“Bah!” the old man commented, “dregs and sediments!”

“What do you mean?” the Duke shouted angrily. “What can you, an ignorant workman, know about books? You had better make yourself clear, or I’ll have you beheaded for such insolence.”

“Well” answered the old wheelwright, “it is like this. Here you see me, nearly eighty years old, still making cart wheels. I have taught all I can to my sons, yes, and grandsons. Most of them are good and clever men, but still I have to continue. You see, there are secrets of wheel-making which they cannot pick up and which cannot be explained in words. Is it not the same with philosophy and self-enlightenment? How can it be transmitted by words? Books cannot give the essential, but only what I call dregs and sediments.”

The Duke put away his books and lapsed into silence.

On a visit to Strasbourg I came across Gutenberg’s statue in a square named after him. He was the inventor of cast moveable type in Europe (China had it long before). What a prolific business Gutenberg started! Books in most countries before his time were all made by hand, on papyrus, silk, parchment, palm leaves, and even on baked clay, plates of copper and on soap-stone, and on granite, wherever city life and commerce needed records. Gutenberg would be

amazed if he could see the book production of today. The major countries each publish every year twenty to thirty thousand new books as well as reprints of old ones. And think of the vast production of millions of daily newspapers and periodicals the *Brahmavadin* among them ! Acre by acre, mile by mile, the immense forest of the north, in Canada, Scandinavia and Siberia, are being turned into paper. The bamboo jungles of India are also disappearing and being transformed into paper. And most of all this industry and printing is not only dregs and sediments, it is time-wasting rubbish, leading us further and further away from truth. Only by rare chance can you find a true gem in what is a mountain of print.

Going to the Source

In writing of books the personal note can hardly be avoided. One must write from one's own experience. Perhaps I have been fortunate in having had to discipline and educate myself. At least I have been saved from the prejudices and snobbery of college establishments.

One of the earliest principles of my search came to me when I was in my 'teens. I still hold to it. It is the principle of going to the source, of never being satisfied with the second hand. Give me the original fountain-head. You have to become advertisement-proof, salesman-proof and propaganda-proof. I don't want somebody's version of what Rousseau or Bernard Shaw said. Neither do I want digests and rewritten versions. Comments and interpretations can come later. I am nearly always dissatisfied with translations. I grab a dictionary and look up the Greek, the French, the Sanskrit. It is hardwork but

nothing less satisfies. You have to be all-out which is what is meant by being absolute in your quest for truth. I realize this is a protestant principle, perhaps the only good thing to emerge from the European Reformation. Luther would have fits if he could know that his own technique enabled me to dismiss him as well as the Pope !

Going to the source ! In 1922 I was fifteen, and it was the year when Tut-Ankh-Amun's Tomb was discovered (In London last year the British Museum displayed the glories at a special exhibition). To me the craze for Ancient Egypt came opportunely. My father had taken me to London for the first time. One week, but what a week ! I spent every moment possible in the six Egyptian galleries of the British Museum. I have begun to study the hieroglyphic language. What a freak I must have seemed to my contemporaries. But it was a source experience.

A year later I saw an advertisement for a meeting of the Theosophical Society. It was their emblem which attracted me. You may have seen it—the Indian AUM at the top, representing the Absoulate ; the serpent swallowing its tail, representing Eternity ; inside this reptilian circle, the two interlaced triangles known as King Solomon's Seal (you can see it on the Israeli flag) signifying spirit and matter, and inside that the Crux Ansata, the Egyptian *ankh*, symbol of life. I said to myself "this must be an interesting organization," and that marked a further stage in my quest.

In the Theosophical Society, the dear old ladies tried to get me to read the literature of current leaders. "No, thank you," I told them. "Give me the source book, give me the Secret Doctrine of Madame Blavatsky." Many of them, I found, had never read it. So picture me hugging

four great tomes, as fat and heavy as banker's ledgers, and digging into the esotericism of the Stanzas of Dzyan.

I took to Madame H. P. Blavatsky. I loved her verse, her originality, her word-magic, her polyglot mastery of a dozen languages. She was a genuine witch and her incantations scattered around references to hundreds of religious and philosophic works I had never heard of. What was the Kabbalah? What were the Upanishads? Where could I get the works of Plato, Pythagoras, Shankaracharya, the Buddha, Iamblichus? I was listening to the glamorous music of the Orient for the first time. Here were the mainsprings of Pagan Asian wisdom. H. P. B. endeared herself to me because she evoked the numinous so sadly absent (for me) in the dreary churches. For this, quite apart from her esoterics and system, she deserves my modest tribute.

The Ultimate Source

This rule of going to the source led me first to Nature (a dropout syndrome) and later to the feet of the Guru. In the search the wise man is the human symbol of the Absolute. He does not stand for a doctrine, but for the source of all doctrines (or *darshanas*). He is what Virgil was for Dante, a psychopomp, the guide who knows the difficulties of the Way. The distinction lies beyond all human traffic, and finally beyond the guru-disciple situation. The Stoics, the Epicureans, the Platonists, the Cynics, and the Aristotelians, from a technical, doctrinal point of view, might seem often contrary in their expositions, but united at the same time as philosophers and all claiming correctly the virtue of their Guru Socrates. Despite their variety, they lived in peace and without conflict, one with the other.

They were all affiliated to a common source, which conventionally we may call the Absolute.

The task of the Guru is to show the disciple how to uncover the Lamp which is the Self-Absolute. The aged Buddha on his deathbed told his disciple Ananda, "Be a lamp unto yourself." The doctrines and the measures adopted by various mature disciples are all recognized as conditionings felt by each succeeding Guru to be appropriate to his particular make-up and situation. The Ultimate Source, however is unconditioned, a unitive ocean in which as human beings we are just parts of an indivisible whole of inter-related appearances, spectators in the ever-flowing, ever-changing numinous wonder of the All-life from electron to quasar. The sameness of this cosmic immensity abolishes all the distinctions of man, animal, tree or stone, whether in this actual physical world or in dream or imagination. In every genuine wisdom-text, this Ultimate Absolute is never forgotten. Indeed it is a mark of what I call the LINGUA MYSTICA—the special recognizable language of men who have reached perfection. It is a language of parable, paradox, symbol, metaphor and allegory. The seeker for the Absolute is himself the Absolute. AHAM BRAHMA-SMI (I am the Absolute).

Nature's Book of Symbols

Nature is symbolized as the Great Mother, Shakti, the feminine aspect of the Absolute (Siva). As mighty Maya she is praised by Narayana Guru, the Yogi of Kerala (1854–1928) in a series of verses of adoration, called the Nine-Versed Necklace for the Mother (*Janani Nava Manjari*) of which verses 5 and 6 read :

In Thy whirling dance, Thy playful glance the mind in
a veil doth twine.

All things that appear, both far and near, are the Sport
of the play divine.

With form and name, space, cause and aim, with time
and the ego fires.

With skill Thou weaveth Thy veil that cleaveth, in Thy
dance that never tires,

Vedic blind and dumb to truth we become—oh, rare is
the one who aspires!

The fish in the deeps and the deer that leaps, serpent
and hill and bird,

Man and woman as well as heaven and hell, are Thy
very own forms and word.

In multiple postures with infinite gestures Thou dancest
in every heart,

And I as Thy knower, am Thyself as Bestower—from
thee I am not apart.

From Thy magical sounds flow all that abounds, a play
of Thy miming art.

What I want to say here is that Nature herself is the
greatest book. In Greek it is the visible Logos, the emanated
Word, borrowed like so much else, without acknowledge-
ment, by the Christian St. John in his gospel in the Bible.
Every quivering leaf, every speeding sub-atomic particle,
every fiery star, every microbe or whale, every iceberg, every
volcano spouting molten lava, constitutes a symbol in the
Book of the Mother. And since each symbol is linked to
the whole, it is not just a sign with a single meaning. It is
always related to the whole, by millions of associations,
millions of meanings, at all levels of consciousness, from

the bright to the dark, from the clear to the utmost in mystery. Nature is a Book of Symbols drawing us through the conditioned to the beyond-conscious which is the Unconditioned. Nature's Book is being written all the time, bubbling over with the genius of the Mother, with the newly produced, the unexpected, the marvellous, the *mysterium tremendum* which brings to the sensitive contemplative a trembling of the spirit, a numinous shiver which is the mark of adoration or *bhakti*. It is what Sankara wanted to inject into the dry cold study of grammar.

Inspired poets have invariably turned to this Mother—

“Come forth into the light of things,

Let Nature be your teacher.”

And Wordsworth also adds in a famous passage :

“And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy

Of elevated thoughts : a sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,

And the round ocean and the living air,

And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.”

The technical name for this is hylozoism. Everything is alive, including what we call the inanimate. It is the sensate half of all philosophic life and literature. This is what the great poets want to say. In his poem *Correspondences*, Baudelaire writes of man passing in Nature through forests of symbols (*La Nature ... ou ... l'homme y passe a travers des forets de symboles*). And Goethe, writing to a friend in 1831, a year before his death, told him “Everything speaks to me ... direct vision of things is for me everything. Words count less than ever”.

Three Grades of People, Seekers and Books

Aristotle in *The Nichomachean Ethics* (1.5) describes three kinds of men, namely, the mass of pleasure-seekers, the minority of politically-minded people interested in society, and thirdly, the very few contemplatives interested in absolute truth. The same proportions can be found in the types of books: they can be divided roughly into those which are meant for mass entertainment, those for the benefit of the arts and sciences, and lastly, those which deal with religion, philosophy and mysticism.

Most magazines, many popular newspapers, with pages of comics, and most novels and published dramas, come under the amusing or entertainment category. Textbooks on art and science, histories and political works, and most biography and travel would fall under the second group, while the third type of literature would consist of the works which are concern here, most of them an ancient heritage from the known and unknown Gurus of mankind. But not all. There are those of our own time which should also be regarded as giving insights at least into the vision of the final source. And even among the first and second categories of writings there are exceptions—the dramas of Ancient Greece by Sophokles and Euripides belong in fact to the contemplative section (as do the plays of Kalidasa). Then again, Marx and Engels, Kropotkin and Freud and Jung, each in their own way have their philosophic place well established. So too with the poets. Though on the whole they may not reach up to the peak genius of the purely philosophic writers, they do have their place as instruments which have cleared away much jungle growth on the path, or which have hewn steps upwards towards the summit.

So it is the third category of books which is relevant. But here again there is a further division. This corresponds with the nature-given temperament and endowments of the seeker. It has been stated very clearly by the third century Plotinus. In the third lecture of the first Ennead (a Greek word meaning a group of nine), this intellectual mystic specifies three types of wisdom-seekers. He calls them the Musician, the Lover and the Metaphysician. The first seeks for order and can include the scientist as well as the artist. The second is the devotee or *bhakta*, and the third is the seeker who pursues the good and who strives to live a philosophic life. The first needs the most guidance, the last hardly any at all. In India the first would be the *Jnani* (the knower), the second the *bhakta* (devotee), and the third the *Yogi* (the man of unitive vision). Three types, three ways and three dispositions. According to Plotinus it is only from them that true seekers of the Absolute come, those who can reach the Term, the worldless state of impersonal sameness.

The Seekers of Orderly Systems

The books parallel the human philosophic types. The books can be arranged under these three divisions. By far the greatest quantity of publications known to the West as philosophical belong to the first group—all the systems, the doctrines, the ideologies, the theologies, the cosmologies, both religious and secular—Thomist, Marxian, Spinozian, Cartesian, Kantian, Hegelian, right down to Sartre and Russell and Teilhard de Chardin, would come under this first section. It would include the systems of aesthetics to Croce as well as the orderly speculations of

Eddington and Bergson, and all the reformist seekers from Rousseau to Wells. It would include also puritanical ethical systems such as Theravada Buddhism, as well as the amoral system of the Mahayana Buddhists and the Lamaism of Tibet. Almost the entire body of writings of what the West understands as philosophy composed in the last few hundred years would come under this category. It is marked by the attempt to reduce everything to one system capable of being grasped intellectually.

The Literature of Love or Bhakti

To the second order in the Plotinian grading belong the literary works which all too often overflow with gushing streams of worshipful tears. Here the various kinds of contemplation of the Absolute in its innumerable theistic forms brings about an inner upheaval. It is a counter-movement to the rationalizing of the first grade. It is where the heart bursts out in an ecstasy of wonder and compassion.

Both reason and love have to find their place in the absolutist life, and if the first by itself too often results in being dry and cold, the second by itself is affected by the enjoyment of a hot and humid state of the spirit. Hence for them both the need for guidance to prevent exaggeration. Another kind of coolness is required.

Philosophical love literature is a very mixed bag, to which the name mysticism is loosely given. It consists of much that is worthless, from maukish hymns to the hysteria of nuns such as Catherine of Genoa, as well as great numinous compositions such as the Emperor Julian's *Oration to the Sun*, and the noble sermons of Meister Eckhart.

There is no doubt, however, that the literature of divine

'Though in this world a hundred tasks thou tryest,
'Tis love alone which from thyself will save thee.
Even from earthly love thy face avert not,
Since to the Real it may serve to raise thee.
Ere A, B, C are rightly apprehended
How canst thou con the pages of thy Quran ?
A sage (so heard I), unto whom a student
Came craving counsel on the course before him.
Said ' If thy steps be strangers to love's pathways,
Depart, learn love, and then return before me !
For, shouldst thou fear to drink wine from Form's
 flagon,
Thou canst not drain the draught of the Ideal.
But yet beware ! Be not by form belated ;
Strive rather with all speed the bridge to traverse.
If to the bourn thou fain wouldst bear thy baggage
Upon the bridge let not thy footsteps linger."

Love for the divine in a thousand forms has a copious

literature in India. The *Bhagavad Gita* of Vyasa, which ranks as one of the highest philosophical works, is a song of love for the Absolute. Every one of the great literary Gurus of India composed many hymns of adoration of the divine. Whole series of Maratha Gurus—Jnanesvara, Thukaram, Namdev, Ekanath—produced songs known as *abhangs* which are on the lips of millions to this day. And in the Dravidian South there are the grand philosophical chants of the Saivite Nayanars and the songs of Appar, Jnanasambandar and Sundaramurthi and collections attributed to the Vaisnava Alvars. There are also hymns by the three ancient philosophers of the South—Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva. In the last century there have been the wonderful *bhakti* outpourings of Ramalingaswami and we should also include occasional verses by Vivekananda, as well as the songs of Ramana Maharshi and Narayana Guru.

Apart from Pagan sources, it is rare that poet and philosopher come together in Europe. Most of them are muzzled by Christian dogma. But occasionally there are escapees. In English one thinks of Henry Vaughan and Thomas Traherne, and Blake and Hopkins. It is often a borderland visit more than a full entry into the *bhakti* freedom of the pure Pagan such as the Hindu. For a sample consider Gerald Manley Hopkins' revaluation of the mysterious Third Person (the Holy Spirit) of the Christian Trinity :

“And for all this, nature is never spent ;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things ;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink Eastward, springs—

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

World broods with warm breast and with Ah ! bright
wings."

The Works of High Philosophy

I come now to the third grade of seekers as defined by Plotinus. They want nothing less than full-blast truth. They want emancipation, liberation from doubt, uncertainty, ignorance, opinion and guesswork, and they want it at any price, even if it means leaving home, country, jobs, parents, friends, interests—everything. They are not primarily or particularly interested in the systems and doctrines, or the frenzies of worshippers. By intent they are already philosophers, dear to the Absolute, and, as the Guru Krishna of the *Bhagavad Gita*, repeating what the unknown authors of the *Upanisads* says "dear to the Guru also."

These "born" philosophers approach the supreme works of philosophy "as the hart panteth after the water-brooks." They also have the inner eye which recognizes the true Guru, and the inner ear which distinguishes the authentic Word. And when they see that Guru and hear that Voice, and have come home, they can join with Plotinus who said, after years of despair in searching for a teacher, and after listening to lecture after lecture, finally, when he heard a discourse by an enigmatic Guru known only by the name of Ammonius Saccas, in Alexandria in words that echo down the seventeen centuries since they were uttered "That's the man I've been looking for!"

Such born philosophers are natural yogis who know by some divine endowment the secret of Dialectic, an intuitional gift which enables them to know how to resolve

all pairs of opposites, by remaining at the Centre where all the opinions of right and left, of this and that, meet as the spokes of a wheel meet at the hub. Dialectics enables them to reach sameness or yogic *samatvam*, the power to universalize, beyond all *darshanas* or separative views and visions. This power enables them to know the joy of discrimination (Vivek-ananda !) between what is ephemeral and what is Eternal (*nityanitya*) and to recognize this in all things, inclusive of literature, between writing that is partial and writing that stands above all doctrines. Such rare people are already on the absolutist path. As Plotinus declares, "They are winged already and not, like those others, in need of disengagement, stirring of themselves towards the supernal, but doubting of the way, needing only a Guru. They must be shown, then, and instructed, willing wayfarers by their very temperament, all but self-directed" (*Enneads*, 1-3). The books suited for this class will naturally be the texts composed by the wisdom-masters of all time, whose worth he will easily recognize. These, the cream of all philosophic literature, I shall consider in due course.

The Absolutist Approach

There's an old proverb which says "A man is known by the company he keeps." The books on a man's shelves (or their absence) can tell the same thing about his character, mind and interests. People without books at all are either illiterates, poor proles or may be rich businessmen content with T-V, perhaps. In old countries like India a great deal of literature is carried in the head. Just as there are "illiterates" who know the *Bible* or the *Quran* by heart, so in India there are live tape-recorders who know the

sacred books by heart. These are the invisible libraries, found in villages throughout the world.

“Thus have I heard” is an ancient formula going back to the time of the Buddha, and wandering bards recite the *Puranas* during the full moon nights in summer when light breezes rustle the coconut palms, where white clad listeners enjoy hearing once again the ageless philosophic stories which hundreds of past generations have heard. Somebody comes up to me to say they have an interest in a philosophic way of life. I ask them what source books they have studied. Usually the answer is none; so we know where we are.

From an absolutist point of view, no books can be excluded. The *Kama Sutra* has its place, and *Playboy* or even things like the *Bombay Blitz* and *Reader's Digest*. What matters is where to place them in the spectrum of philosophical literary values.

By far the greater number, the thousands of novels for instance, are centred entirely on social interests. If we are to hazard what makes for greatness in literature, as in the other arts, it must be transcendence of closed social values. There must be the principle of universality. There must also be same absolutist element, either in characterization, in the plot or even in daring to write what has not been attempted before.

The tragedy of lovers is a universal theme. Romeo and Juliet, Desdemona or Ophelia have all to die to bring out the absolutism of their love against the merely relativistic quarrels, or rumours, or rottenness of the society in which they are placed. The absolutist intensity would be ast if they all lived happily ever after. Faust is also uni-

versal as the man who is willing to go to eternal damnation for the sake of either pleasure or knowledge. He is neither goody-goody nor chicken-hearted. He is far more absolutist than Mephistopheles. Homer's Ulysses is an absolutist hero, winning over the elements in wild as well as human nature. Burn's bold declaration that "a man's a man for a' that," despite his social status and that "the rank is but the guinea-stamp, the man's the gold" is also universalist and therefore absolutist, likewise his equalizing himself with a field mouse or a daisy. Rabelais—the soul of France as Hugo called him—with his rumbustious liberation of the French language from the prison of the Church scholastics and Cardinals and his common French bawdy, is also absolutist.

Wordsworth's Principle

You will remember I mentioned Plotinus' division of philosophical types into three classes, the first being that of lovers of harmony and order, and that this grade included the artist and scientist. The artist is seeking unity at the level of the feelings, the scientist the same unity at the level of the intellect. Thus they are seeking the same universal and inside are not as wide apart as they appear to be outside in the world of expression. Wonder is present in both.

The scientist is looking for a common order which will unite all the diverse facts in the various fields of his interest, looking for a science of sciences which will show the common structure holding together the sub-atomic as well as the supergalactic forms which come under his survey and investigation in the *outer* field of the senses.

The artist too reveals the universality of life in terms of *inner* sensation and intuitional experience in an extended area which includes the invisible and even in rare cases the Unconditioned, using symbols drawn from the Unconditioned (or Unconscious) where words in ordinary usage drop away or at least have to be given new, profounder meaning. As Wordsworth put it in the Observations which prefaced his *Lyrical Ballads*, it is "the perception of similitude in dissimilitude." This principle, common to both artist and scientist, is the search for sameness which is the mark of yogic understanding.

In the same essay Wordsworth points out that the peculiar pleasure we get from metre is just this recognition of the principle of sameness or similitude. It is the drone behind the melody, the common notes of the drum. It is the binding scale or the selected common notes of the Indian *raga* behind the variations and improvisations of the singer. It is the white screen of frame behind the movie. It is not really fixed, but a unitive rhythm alternating with a yin-yang pulsation. Seeing this, the wise man or Guru is able to solve the diverse problems confronting mankind. He is able to see the beginnings and the end of current cycles, large or small, the dancing of the elves as well as the cavorting of the giants, of atom as well as star, of ant as mighty whale, of night and day as well as the rise and fall of civilizations. Sparks can fly between individuals as well as between the colossal empires, and every dialogue is only worthwhile when the alternating rhythm is maintained. It is this recognition of the rhythmic principle which makes the grand dialogues of the world's contemplatives, those of ancient Greek philosophers, those of the Buddhists such as

the *Milinda-Panha*, and those compressed within the 700 verses of the *Bhagavad Gita*. In the absence of characters an innovator such as James Joyce can even have a dialogue with himself.

The principle of sameness as distinguished from otherness, of *samya* from *anya* is therefore central to the contemplative life. As Chuang Tse put it in the second book of his writings, everything is a *this* to itself and *that* to other things, while the true seer stands above both this and that.

Narayana Guru expressed it many times. In verse 38 of his *Atmopadesha Satakam* (100 verses of self-instruction), he wrote :

“The state called ‘the other’ does manyness know ;
While what sees ‘the same’ united shines it :
Thus knowing these states, into ‘sameness’ do go,
And into it fuse, blend and uprightly sit.”

The *Bhagavad Gita* (verse II. 48) agrees. It says “Yoga is called sameness” (*Samatvan yoga uchyate*).

The Value of Fairy Tales

Literary value-judgements will depend upon whether the work under review is approached for its absolutist character or not. From the social or relativistic point of view, Hamlet's death is tragic and to be sorrowed over. The relativistic approach demands a happy ending. But is only by being willing to die for his cause that Hamlet (and his creator) are absolutist and great. From an absolutist point of view, Hamlet alive would be an anti-climax. But Hamlet dead puts him with the immortals and represents an absolutist victory.

The attraction of great art, drama or literature, of

poems which haunt one with un forgettable lines consists in the perennial message they have for the absolute Self. Hence we can see *Hamlet* many times without being wearied, even though we know the plot and the lines by heart. This is especially true of Greek drama, but it is also true of the least pretentious art known as fairy-tales or folk-lore. Great literature is meant for the universal Self and soars away far beyond the daily commerce of work, of getting and spending.

It is quite wrong to dismiss fairy-tales as being childish. Their numinous magic grips the soul because they convey a secret message from the unconditioned Source. The psychologist Carl Jung has thrown immense light on the subject, showing the universality of the great archetypal figures, objects and *Mandalas* with which fairy-tales are filled. Fairy-tales by their use of non-specialized, non-individualized-consciousness imagery speak to the Self in its own language of symbols and universals. No matter what troubles may confront the hero or heroine, there is always some last minute intervention by a Chance or Divine element. And there is the Wise Old Man or Guru, as well as his counterpart, the Great Mother. The folk-story or German *Maerchen* speaks the *Lingua Mystica* of the common people. Without exception, all the world's wisdom teachers have used this language of magic, metaphor and parable. Some are classics of their kind like the Chinese *Monkey* or the *Yoga Vasistha* of India.

Monkey (by Wu Ch'eng-en, translated by Arthur Waley, Grove Press, New York) tells the story of Tripitika's pilgrimage to India to bring back the Buddhist scriptures to China. The chief character, Monkey, is the restless human

mind, the character Pigsy is the body with its greedy needs and Sandy who represents the feeling, and intuition. About the book Waley writes: "Monkey is unique in its combination of beauty with absurdity, of profundity with nonsense. Folk-lore, allegory, religion, history, anti-bureaucratic satire and pure poetry—such are the singularly diverse elements out of which the book is compounded."

There is no good translation of the *Yoga Vasistha* in English. An abbreviated edition is available in many Indian languages. I suspect it was composed to do for the *Ramayana* what the *Bhagavad Geeta* represents within the context of the other epic, the *Maha-Bharatha*. The *Yoga Vasishtha* abounds with stories which deal with dreams within dreams and maya magic and illustrative stories to illumine some particular vedantic truth or doctrine. Of the folk-tale Schiller wrote "Deeper meaning lies in the fairy-tale of my childhood than in the truth that is taught by life." For such deeper meanings consider just two examples of the fairy-tale.

In "Jack the Giant-killer," we have the great beanstalk or tree which extends from earth and disappears in the sky or heaven. Jack climbs up to find the treasure hoarded by the giant. Then Jack manages to escape, comes down, chops the tree and kills the giant. The allegory is clear. It is the same tree of *Samsara* as found in the 15th chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, which when cut down, kills the giant or ego which stands between the treasure (or truth, liberation) and the seeker who is here called Jack.

Another story tells of the fisherman's wife and the wishing ring. As a reward for letting the king of the fishes return to the sea, a fisherman gets a ring with three wishes. His wife, for ever grumbling about their poverty, wishes

for all the things she has wanted, but when she gets them, she is most unhappy and so, finally, uses up the third wish to be once again a poor, but wiser fisherman's wife. This story shows the need to transcend all relativistic values, and that all the riches of the welfare state or all that dollars can buy does not guarantee the happiness that lies in being content with simple living.

The power of the fairy-tale is the same as that of the myth. Both transcend the limitations of the pedestrians, socialized, personal, conscious mind. The conditionings are broken. Children not only accept but understand these excursions into the unconditioned part of our nature. This is because their personalities are not yet hardened and fixed by the claims of the conscious waking world. They are not yet involved or committed.

For this reason the aspirant to spiritual freedom is often told to regain the innocent free state of infancy, left behind as soon as schooling or educational conditioning begins. We should not, therefore, despise the fairy-tale or shrug it off because it is "for children." Both Jesus and Lao Tzu tell us to become like little children. An anonymous 13th century German poem emphasizes this rule :

" A child become, be deaf, blind, dumb.
 Thy inmost I must wholly die.
 All aye, all nay, but drive away.
 Leave time, leave place, e'vn thought efface
 Thy way pursue with ne'er a clue,
 So comest thou on the trackless trace.
 O Soul of mine, through God untwine.
 Sink as 'I so' Godhead's 'No,'
 Sink in the never-sounded flood !

Fly I from Thee, Thou comest to me :
Forsake I me so find I Thee,
O inconceivable Good ! ”

In facing and examining literature in its true absolutist or contemplative value, we have to be as St. Matthew's Jesus tells us : “ Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. ” The literary world of today reflects the chaos, the absurdities, violence, drunkenness, obscenity and emptiness of society, the era of the detective novel, the thriller, and science fiction. Women seem to write the best detective fiction may be because they represent Diana the spirit of the hunt, while men write excellent stories of the worlds, where perhaps, justice and ethics have kept pace with the discoveries and dangerous inventions of science.

There is perhaps an absolutist feature in being permitted now-a-days to write four-letter Anglo-Saxon words instead of their Latin equivalents. In the West the state of affairs is much like that of the fisherman's wife. Now that you can use coarse words there is nothing to say. Pornography is not really shocking. It is boring. Hinduism avoided this by making eroticism sacred. The Absolute is like Rebelais, never respectable.

There is one distinguishing feature of wisdom literature which cannot be too highly stressed. This concerns the general aim. Leaving aside literature for entertainment whose sole aim is to amuse, a mere pastime, the magazines and thrillers you leave behind in railway coaches, there remains two other aims possible.

One is a concern for man collectively, the literature of social uplift, reform or revolution. Ardent lovers of humanity invent marvellous schemes for the ideal society and

then, when they have done their planning, hunt around for a philosophy which will fit into their plans and if none is available, they will invent one. This is the great flaw in the writings of many lovers of mankind from Voltaire and Rousseau to Marx and Russell, Swift and Tolstoy, Wells and Shaw, all get trapped here.

On the other hand, philosophy proper is not outward-turned but looks inward. It is not concerned primarily with man the member of a herd but with man the individual seeker for liberation from everything that binds him, including the community. The one is concerned with action—asking the question, “What shall I do?” The other is concerned with the nature of the Self—asking the question, “Who am I?”

This does not mean that the wise man is indifferent to the happiness of all life, inclusive of mankind. But the cart must not be put in front of the horse. Today on all sides we see man being mutilated in order to fit into the Procrustean bed of the political ideologists, capitalist, socialist or communist. The true way is the reverse of this. It is the Self which must change the Self and free the Self—you and I as individuals. By reason of birth we are already part of the Great Society which we call Nature, and that Nature is always good although we may not see the good at first in the suffering and death. Jesus told his disciples not to plan, to take no thought of the morrow, but rather “Seek ye first the kingdom of God” which is the way of the absolute, and then “all these things” inclusive of the best human society, “shall be added unto you.”

Hence in matters of wisdom the search for Self-knowledge and Immortality comes first.

The Rediscovery of Eastern Wisdom

A Scholastic and religious revolution overwhelmed the Western world in 1879 when Max Muller published the first of the fifty volumes of *The Sacred Books of the East*. He was head of a band of twenty scholars. Wisdom's Oriental Doors opened wide after being closed for nearly one and a half millenia.

In effect, the closed-in Christian Establishments suffered a smash-up from which they have never recovered. The Old and New Testaments of the Bible were seen in their proper global perspective as being comparatively minor works of wisdom. They were obviously incomparable with what the East had to show in scope, depth and fullness of exposition of philosophy and of the philosophical way of life. They showed a pale candle-light indeed, against the sun of the vast source-books of religion and philosophy of Asia.

That clear distinction, well known in Indian Philosophy of the difference between *Smriti* and *Shruti*, is not known in the West. It is the difference between a code of laws and pure wisdom principles. Consequently, dogmatic legalism is continually at loggerheads with pure mysticism.

The End of the Christian Era

Broadly speaking, the two portions of the Bible represent these two divisions—the Old the way of work, and the New (the four synoptic gospels) the way of wisdom, one, the way of Martha and the other, the way of Mary ; one, the terrible “thou shalt not”—Ten Commandments of Moses contrasted with “let the dead bury their dead”, and “Find the Kingdom of Heaven” of Jesus. In studying what are called sacred or scriptural books you have to be on

guard continually to discern these two dialectically opposite ways. One way leads to social reform and politics, the other way to spiritual enlightenment. In Iran there are the dogmatic edicts of the Maulvis contrasted with the quietism and philosophical poetry of the Sufis. In China, the distinction goes back over two thousand years between the way of Confucius and the way of Lao Tzu.

Some years ago one of my Indian disciples was preparing to go the United States. In order to prepare him with part of the background needed if he was to enter into the mind of the Christian-educated people he would be meeting. I took up the Bible for study with him for three months for an hour each morning and evening. Over and over again he would complain about the watered down teaching of the Bible when compared with what he knew of the Upanishads or the Bhagavad Gita. I had to explain to him that this was quite true, and it was the misfortune of Western people. The Bible was originally meant for a narrow group of tribalistic Jews, a sort of Palestinian Brahmins, obsessed with the notion of being the God Jehovah's "chosen people."

So gate after gate crashed down as Max Muller's bombshells shot out of Oxford. Seekers after truth could not fail to see the philosophic superiority of the Indian texts with the Christian. The Jowett in 1892 began to issue his translations of the Platonic Dialogues, and others followed, giving the nonacademic reader fairly sound translations of other Greek texts, Stoic, Cynic, Epicurean, etc. Once again every honest seeker had to admit that the Pagan hymns of Kleanthes or of Julian had a richness and sublimity far beyond the mawkish and often war-minded church hymnaries. Professional priest-scholars like Dean Inge

thundered in vain against what they called an invasion of Orientalism.

Thus ended a long era of philosophical ignorance, prejudice, dogmatism, fanaticism and wilful suppression of the world's great heritage of wisdom source-books. We have only brief notes of what the closing of the Athenian Ashramas by Justinian in the year 529 meant for Europe. B. A. G. Fuller, for instance, in his thousand pages *History of Philosophy*, gives but twenty lines to this very important, shocking event. For the truth-seeker, such an event is one of the greatest tragedies in history, and yet Fuller and all the historians of philosophy pass over it lightly, because, being Christians, they think it was a right and proper thing. It only proves how committed they are to the Church Establishments or it may be that they lack the courage to possibly endanger their academic careers. In his brief chronology at the end of his book, Fuller sums up thus : " Closing of the Schools of Athens. End of Ancient Philosophy. Philosophy in servitude to Christian Theology for the next nine centuries, 529 A. D. " The " nine centuries ", I suppose, means, up to the Renaissance, which is another far too mild statement. Eleven centuries latter, in 1600, Bruno was burned at the stake. Thus we get the distortions by the historians. They know but dare not speak !

Absence of the Guru

You may have read Will Durant's *Story of Philosophy*. At the end, he has a " Table of Philosophical Affiliations ". There he links Bergson with Herakleitos, Russell with Leukippos, etc. Now, while it is admitted that all philosophers, consciously, or not, draw upon the works and teach-

ings of the past—whatever is available—what is not clearly understood is that we have only their systems to go upon, and that in Europe the Church cut out the heart of philosophy when it destroyed the Guru-succession principle (Greek *diadokhos*; Samskrit *parampara*) in 529. What this means becomes very clear when you read the ancient European pre-Christian texts. You are then at once in the same atmosphere of guruhood and discipleship as you are when you read the philosophic works from the East. But when you read Descartes or even Spinoza, let alone recent writers such as Bergson or Russell, this distinct living flavour has gone. To see this requires a special metaphysical “eye.”

With some effort, people today can usually find fair translations of the world’s wisdom texts. But one wonders why this highest form of knowledge is not part of the educational system. Here we have to point out another rival, a movement inimical to both the Church and Philosophy, including the terrible “Orientalism.” This, of course, is the Scientific Establishment. Worst of all, in India, where you would think philosophy would be sustained and encouraged as the noblest and highest treasure, the scientific materialist attitude is encouraged and philosophy more or less discredited if not banned outrightly in the name of being “secular” as the Indian Constitution declares. This is a sad state of affairs, and, unless a youngster in India has been given a traditional spiritual foundation at home, he will know practically nothing, except in some garbled way, of his own heritage of wisdom. Everything is sacrificed for the sake of a career which has to be modern and “scientific.” Philosophy offers no career. People may point out the solitary case of ex-President Radhakrishnan but if he had been a real

philosopher which means also being a Guru, the whole history of India would have been vastly different. Politics pays, but philosophy doesn't, and worse still, it can put ideas into a youngster's head and even drive him into the drop-out world of the Sadhu and Sannyasin. Thus the dichotomy, the schizophrenia, the double-interest which splits the mind of the Indian today, whether consciously or in the deeper realms of his soul. The deep roots of the past are entangled with the new roots of the present, and both struggle to be rid of each other and to gain supremacy. This is the tragedy of the twentieth century modern educated Indian. He is faced all the time with a nagging he "which?"

From 1875, when it was founded in the United States, upto 1929 when the movement crashed on the rocks of the muchboosted Messiah J. Krishnamurti, who blew the gaff on such pretensions, the Theosophical Society also encouraged its own brand of Orientalism. Its leaders went in for much that is questionable, but the Society kept alive the spirit of inquiry and another gateway into the fascinating wonderland of Asian religion and philosophy was opened. Its mistake was to build up another system based on the dogmas of esotericism of a few Western "occultists." People looking for liberation were not going to be caught in yet another dubious Establishment in which the ego, far from being abolished, was sublimated into a monster with unlimited expansion of consciousness as its goal. And so, while Theosophists did say, "Here is the East, Here is the ancient home of Sophia or Wisdom," their version was, after all, a *version*. Unfortunately for them, in the final resort the source-books remain to challenge the versions, for Truth is not a system, nor a version, but a way of life.

A Note on Swami Vivekananda

Some readers may ask, "What about Swami Vivekananda and the publications, since his time, coming from the Advaita Ashram which he founded?"

Certainly, Vivekananda (who died at the age of forty in 1902) deserves all praise for his genius during the last years of the Victorian age, in challenging the pretensions and claims of moral superiority of the Christian Missionaries. His method was that of a freelance boldly entering a new field. His writings sparkle with rich original ideas, not all of them warranted by Indian tradition, but possibly justified because of the type of people he had to address. His weakness was that he was in a hurry, and that he still had non-Advaitic interests such as Indian patriotism; but his writings are always a joy to read. *His* writings, please note, for unfortunately, since his time, his style has been vainly copied all too often *ad nauseum* mostly by half-educated Bengali Swamis who discovered an easy way to fame by putting on the ochre robe, appearing lofty and saying in a loud and arrogant voice what Vivekananda said in his proper context over seventy years ago. And of course, Brahminism, looking always for enclaves of power, also took over the organization. The term "Hindu Monk" is often applied to Swami Vivekananda, an epithet completely foreign to a Sannyasin who is not a monk as Vivekananda himself firmly stated when writing on the nature of a Sannyasin. It is no service to Indian wisdom to get translations by semi-literates who fail to know the difference between a religious attitude and a spirit of absolutism. Nor does Hindu Tantra, Sanatana Dharma or Vedanta fit into the context of the Hebraic or Christian Church, for the spirit of

Indian Philosophy and Religion (Hinduism generally, like that of pre-Christian Pagan Europe, is non-institutional, non-establishment, non-credal), its basis purely and simply is in the Guru and Sishya relationship alone. Religion, with its priests, properties and places of worship belongs to the *Smriti* or social side of life. The Guru's Ashram, on the other hand, is for the individual seeker ; indeed, in many cases, even the Ashram, as a place, is un-necessary. As the antique image symbol from pre-Aryan Indus Valley pre-historic times clearly shows, the Indian way of Wisdom is indicated by the figure of the Guru as a Yogi sitting in the shelter of a banyan or sacred fig tree. As soon as there is a building, let alone an institution, all sorts of weeds spring up which are totally extraneous to the spirit of the Yogi and the natural way of spiritual teaching, things which divert the mind from the task of liberation. Adoration of all Gurus is the only form of 'religion' that a Sadhu can justly encourage. This is definitely not social. In this, I believe, I am faithful to the true spirit of philosophy of Pagan Europe as well as of Pagan India (or anywhere else). To imitate the Roman Catholic Church or the Quakers and other Protestant Groups, is not in keeping with the free spirit of Brahmavidya.

The Philosophia Perennis

Another great event in the history of wisdom literature and particularly in helping to remove some of the centuries of ignorance of Western Man was the publication in 1944, of Aldous Huxley's *The Perennial Philosophy*. His opening is worth quoting : "*Philosophia Perennis*—the phrase was coined by Leibniz ; but the the thing—the metaphysic that

recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds ; the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with divine Reality ; the ethic that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and the transcendent Ground of all being—the thing is immemorial and universal."

Huxley continues ; " When poets or metaphysicians talk about the subject-matter of the Perennial Philosophy, it is generally at second-hand. But in every age there have been some men and women who chose to fulfil the conditions upon which alone, as a matter of brute empirical fact, such immediate knowledge can be had ; and of these a few have left accounts of the Reality they were thus enabled to apprehend and have tried to relate—To such first hand exponents of the Perennial Philosophy those who knew them have generally given the name of 'saint' or 'prophet' 'sage' or Enlightened One. And it is mainly to these, because there is good reason for supposing that they knew what they were talking about, and not to the professional philosophers or men of letter, that I have gone for my selections." Huxley concludes his Introduction by saying. "If one is not oneself a sage or saint, the best thing one can do in the field of metaphysics, is to study the works of those who were and who, because they had modified their merely human mode of being, were capable of a more than merely human kind and amount of knowledge."

We miss, however, one important factor here, namely, the place of the living qualified teacher or Guru. There is of course a reason for this lacuna, and that is the rarity outside India and possibly Japan (for Tibet's and China's Gurus have vanished as far as we can say, apart from any who may

be in exile) of the living teacher. To reach to the presence of a living author of a genuine "metaphysical writing" and to have your doubts removed by the perennial Guru-Sishya dialogue, the *Samveda*, the coming together of a seeker who knows and a seeker who is still seeking, is therefore exceedingly rare, although in the time of Plato it was taken for granted as an integral part of the philosophic life. Even to be in the presence of such a knower of Reality is a spiritual event of enormous importance. As Narayana Guru, one of the very rare ones, said in his *Atmopadesha Satakam* (One hundred self-teaching verses) :

"No more to wake, and yet be without sleep,
In pure Awareness' State always to be—
If this, for you, though longed for, is too deep,
Then serve the silent AUM-Awake who, free
From all the many rounds of births remain,
And to That Sacred Form thyself attain." (*Verse 7*)

Huxley made good use of his scholastic trained encyclopedic mind, alive in many languages, to show to an astonished Western world (and to many in the East who might have dismissed the West as being thoroughly debased in metaphysical matters) the unity of sages everywhere on all essential statements. He also did great service by directing the attention of Seekers of Reality to over one hundred books of which the cream, I would say, are the following (alphabetically listed) :

1. Al-Ghazzali, *Confessions*; 2. Ansari of Heart, *The Invocations*; 3. Attar, *Selections*; 4. Vyasa, *Bhagavad Gita*; 5. Jacob Boehme, *Works*; 6. Chuang Tzu, *Writings*; 7. Anon, *The Cloud of Unknowing*; 8. Paul Deussen, *The*

Philosophy of the Upanishads ; 9. *Dionysos the Aeropagite* ; 10. Eckhart, *Works* ; 11. Evans-Wentz, *Milarepa* ; 12. Goddard, *A Buddhist Bible* ; 13. *The Imitation of Christ* ; 14. Lao Tzu, *The Tao Teh Ching* ; 15. Patanjali, *Yoga Sutras* ; 16. Sri Ramakrishna, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* ; 17. Rumi, Jalal-uddin, *Masnavi* ; 18. Ruysbroeck, *Works* ; 19. HuiNeng, *Sutras* ; 20. Anon, *Theologica Germanica* ; 21. Underhill, Evelyn, *Mysticism* ; 22. *The Upanishads* ; 23. Watts, Allan W. *The Spirit of Zen*.

Huxley gave very special emphasis to the Mystics of Christian Europe, but with the exception of a few such as Eckhart, and the unknown authors of the *Imitation* and the *Theologica Germanica*, these can have but a passing interest for the seeker of wisdom literature. I give this curtailed list partly to show the difficulties besetting anyone who sets out, as I have done myself, to suggest what might be read with profit. Huxley has some startling omissions. Plotinus, the greatest of the extant writers in the Greek tradition, both an attained mystic and scholar, is mentioned but once, and then a short quotation. Plato and the Greeks generally are treated only incidentally. He emphasizes Dionysos the Aeropagite who is a second-rate exponent of Greek Philosophy, perhaps because it was through his writings, confused with the St. Denis, Patron Saint of France, that a little leaven got into the Church dough, through a trick played on the Establishment by John the Scot, otherwise Erigena, in the ninth century.

The Place and Popularity of Zen

When the works of Prof. Suzuki of Japan, the famous *Essays on Zen Buddhism*, began to appear from 1927 onwards,

little could he or Christmas Humphreys of the Buddhist Society in London, guess what shapes and postures it would take in the hippy world of the sixties and seventies. For a quarter of a century now, Zen has spread all over the world with phenomenal vigour. Instant Buddhahood or Sudden Enlightenment caught on like Instant Coffee. Hundreds of thousands of students in Western countries have some inkling of this Far Eastern form of spiritual Absolutism.

Suzuki's books written often in quaint English, have been superseded by better styled literature, among which *The Way of Zen* by Alan W. Watts (Mentor, 1959) and *Zen in English Literature* and *Oriental Classics* by R. H. Blyth (Dutton Paperback 1960) are outstanding examples.

Why is Zen so popular in the West ? I believe its appeal is largely because it dispenses with religion and scriptures, gods and priests. Traditionally it is held to begin with the Buddha holding up a lotus flower, saying nothing and getting the response of a knowing smile from Mahakasyapa. That loveable, ferocious-faced figure, Bodhi-Dharma, said to be the son of a king in Kanchipuram in South India, who was the twenty-eighth in succession to Mahakasyapa in the sixth century, took this wordless teaching to China and there became the First Patriarch and founder of Ch'an, otherwise Dhyana or Zen according as to whether it was named in Chinese, Samskrit or Japanese. With its Buddhist and Hindu-Tantrist roots, it was easily grafted on to the native Tao traditional wisdom of China, and became almost indistinguishable from Tao, as it cut out verbiage, reaching out directly to the Nirvanic experience of what the Japanese call *Satori*.

Zen appeals to the Western seeker because it is icono-

clastic and goes in for direct seeing into the unbroken wholeness of Reality or Tao. But it is not without its discipline with the same minimal qualifications which all genuine philosophy demands. Its aim is not the presentation of a conceptualized system, but the transformation of the individual, as Jung points out in his Foreword to Suzuki's *Introduction to Zen Buddhism* (Grey Arrow, 1959). As with everything else, it is easy to pretend to Zen. It is used to justify any sort of revolt against convention, law and order, but its actual discipline is very rigorous indeed, when carried out under a Zen master. This is what most "followers" of Zen lack. Like Yoga, Zen is only for those who have the highest qualifications. Zen is a serious discipliner and not to be confused with psychedelics and taking hallucinatory drugs. If even the very image and concept of the Buddha is to be thrown away, therefore, much more so the toys of the Hippies whose spirit may be admirable but whose manifestations are often pranky and adolescent.

So much, then, for Max-Muller, Aldous Huxley, Vivekananda, the theosophists and the apostles of Zen (from types like the respectable London Lawyer Christmas Humphreys to the wild and shocking Allen Ginsberg, the so-called Guru of the Hippies). If I have said nothing about other literature stemming from Delhi, Rishikesh, Almora, Pondicherry and other places, it is because it deviates from the straight tradition of the "Perennial Philosophy", with self-styled Yogis and Rishis, and so many exploiters of innocents coming from the Far West and the Far East.

While I believe alone the followers and their attachments to this or that figure or place, it is quite another matter when

it comes to defining which are the worthwhile source-books, or genuine *Shruti*. There, in fairness, I must uphold this and reject that, if a guide to the books is to be written at all.

Scholastic Errors and Omissions

In surveying the totality of philosophical literature, there is still immense co-ordinating, consolidating, concordant and integrating work to be done. It is not merely the linking together of Eastern and Western sources. Most of what is really important, the living aspect of philosophy is neglected in Europe. Since philosophy centres in the psyche, the inner living aspects should have the foremost place in any study of the subject. It is a psychological science. Philosophy without the psyche or soul or self is something else, but is not philosophy. It transcends the physical sciences as well as logic. At the same time, it gives them their due place under an epistemological and ontological umbrella.

But all this has been neglected because the empirical approach which is a discipline proper to the physical sciences has been applied to the metaphysical discipline. Western philosophy has therefore, got stuck in the morass of the academic, scholastic, intellectual and systematic disciplines. Much that is of value is omitted or dismissed because of this. Ancient autochthonous religious and philosophic sources, such as the Scandinavian, Teutonic and Celtic, along with deeply rooted and strongly affective subjects such as Alchemy, Hermeticism, the witch religions and folklore, all chockful of ancient wisdom and symbolism, have hardly been studied and are usually bypassed as of little value. But this is far from being the case. The

psyche of Western man feeds on all this accumulated heritage from its pre-Christian Pagan past and never on the stuff which fills its waking intellectual consciousness. This has been amply proved by Jung in several massive volumes, fully documented, and crammed with researches and evidence. Jung is the only academic who has given full credit to the Indian and Chinese ideas of the Self. Indeed ! it could be said that he spent his life proving to a "scientific" world the existence of the Self.

The sum of the matter is that many neglected authors or even little known treatises by well-established ancient philosophers assume an importance which you would never guess from reading the histories of ancient philosophy. Thus, for example, Plato's *Epistle VII* (Bobbs-Merrill, New York 1962) is treated as a minor scrap to be dismissed in favour of the more popular *Dialogues*. But actually, this epistle or letter reveals the requirements needed in a pupil and gives hints about the method of transmission of wisdom between teacher and pupil (Guru and Sishya) which are identical with those known in India. It is part of the inner substance and a background which is taken for granted by Plato, as a Guru. But how is this to be known or recognized by an academic historian or university lecturer on philosophy whose interest is merely scholastic and not primarily that of a passionate seeker for liberation, and who, besides, would not recognize the parallel from the Indian situation ? And yet any real study of Plato must begin with what he discloses in this most precious letter and then, when this is understood, there can be a profitable study of Plato's other and more public works.

The Case Diogenes Laertios

There are two main charges I have against modern teachers of philosophy, which mars their works and makes me thoroughly suspicious of their judgements. The first is just pure high-hat conceit. Just because they happen to have been born two thousand and more years later than the Greek teachers, they assume, on the basis of a convenient theory of up-from-the-ape evolution, to which they have been conditioned, along with a spiritual imperialism which must equate with the discoveries and inventions of technology, that they are by this odd destiny, superior in every respect to these philosophical primitives, in exactly the same way as they view the so-called underdeveloped inhabitants of societies and countries who have not had the grace to be born in the technically superior West. With a built-in 'evolutionary' prejudice, the scientific equivalent of the theologian's holier-than-thou, they dismiss accurate observers such as Herodotus, although over and over again he has been proved to be correct in his observations.

The second and graver charge I would make is concealment of the evidence along with depreciation of the sources and of the source writers. This is particularly obvious in the case of Diogenes Laertios.

Rune's *Dictionary of Philosophy*, a compilation by various experts, has the following insertion by Eugene Holmes under the reference "Diogenes Laertios." "A late biographical doxographer to whom is owed most of the biographical and source material of pre-Socratic philosophy." Note that word 'most.'

Will Durant lists him in his *Story of Philosophy*, but mentions him only incidentally once and, even then,

quotes him at second-hand. Diogenes Laertios is not in the bibliography of B.A.G. Fuller, nor is he found in his Index. He is not found in Professor Cushman's two volumes either. Windelband in his *History of Philosophy*, refers to him here and there, but without any due credit.

But even worse than no mention at all, is the remark by Professor John Burnet in his famous *Early Greek Philosophy*. Fifty per cent of Burnet's material is derived from an author about whom he writes: "The work which goes by the name of Laertios Diogenes is, in its biographical parts, a mere patchwork of all earlier learning. It has not been digested or composed by any single mind at all, but is little more than a collection of extracts made at haphazard. But of course, it contains much that is of the greatest value." It is like the reluctant praise of a stupid Nazi for a clever Jew.

You may remember what I wrote about going to the source. Well, if you go directly to Diogenes Laertios (two small volumes published by Heinemann in the Loeb Series), you will find that, far from being a patchwork, it is a most valuable treatise, because for one thing, it shows how, through succession (*diadokhe* in Greek, *paramparya* in Samskrit) wisdom was passed on from Guru to Sishya, by the same methods well known to Indian Philosophy.

Are academic historians of philosophy unable to recognise the importance of all this? And when they owe so much to a writer, why the reluctance to give him due credit? And why, most of all, do they hide an important source in such a furtive way? I cannot help having the impression of a conspiracy by these Greek knowing professors to dip secretly into Diogenes Laertios, while at the same time keeping him away from the general public. All this is

high class cheating. True, of course, if the seeker for wisdom sources would read for himself *The Life and Wisdom of Famous Philosophers* by Diogenes Laertius there would be no need to buy and read the books of Durant, Fuller, Windelband, Burnet and others. Their main source of reputation would suffer and worse still, their literary income would diminish !

Vyasa's Gita

There is a question sometimes put to well-known personalities, 'If you were to be exiled on a desert island and could choose one book to take with you, which could it be? Some might choose the Bible, or the Quran, or Das Kapital, or even a one volume encyclopedia. In my case, I would not hesitate for a moment. It would be the 'Bhagavad Gita.'

Just think how remarkable is the way the Gita has spread round the World. No modern man can call himself educated unless he has some acquaintance with this most popular of all the wisdom productions of Asia.

It is a mystery how this has come about. The Gita has never been propagated in the way that zealous Christian Missionaries have "spread the Gospel." There are no pedlars with satchels or vans thrusting the Gita into innocent and often unwelcome hands as with many richly endowed evangelist Christian organizations. There is no Hindu Church with massive funds and no societies for its propagation. In Indian hotels you won't find the Gita in your bedroom as you find the Bible (alongside the telephone directory) on your bedside table in hotels in U. S. A. And yet the fact is that the Gita is known practically every-

where. We can only assume that the Gita has become universally known by its own merits. It has caught the attention of all who read it. Everything about it is wonderful.

To give you some idea of its amazing popularity, let me just mention the Gita collection of an enthusiastic French scholar M. Paul Hubert. When I visited him in Paris in 1962, he had 152 translations in sixteen European languages. Besides rare first editions, such as that of the earliest in English, that of Charles Wilkins published in 1785. M. Hubert had also many commentaries and expository volumes.¹

The Gita in My Life

But for this singular diffusion, how else could I have come upon the Gita when I was fourteen (both the Besant-Bhagavan Das edition and the poetic "Song Celestial" of Sri Edwin Arnold) nearly fifty years ago? Is it not a strange proof of the way the wind of wisdom blows that a youngster, coming from the poorest of working-class families, living this in a small country town in Scotland, should be having this supreme wisdom text in his hands? Remember too, that in climate and in the intolerant religious atmosphere of bigotted Calvinism, Scotland is the dialectical opposite of tropical, easy-going, tolerant, idolatrous India. And yet, as I said, here was this wonderful, oriental Pagan wisdom text opening up inward vistas, striking mystical chords completely outside every kind of environmental

1. M. Hubert has published a booklet about his collection: *Histoire de la Bhagavad Gita : ses diverses éditions de 1785 à nos jours* (Adyar-Paris, 1949.)

conditioning in my consciousness. Their future effects for me were to be climaxed by my association, forty years later, as an amanuensis with a guru in doing his own translation and commentary on the Gita in the land of the Gita. Awesome indeed are ways of the Absolute.

To follow the guru's mind both in translating and interpreting the text, word, by word, phrase by phrase, sloka by sloka, chapter by chapter, always holding in mind the whole work as one, with myself in the wilfully intended role of a modern sceptic (or *purva pakshin*) asking questions all the way, raising on purpose doubts at every stage, day in and day out for over a year, was itself a prolonged act of *Yoga* and *Tapas*, of dedication and meditation, as well as my personal tribute to this supreme text, and it was a triumph to see this grand work complete and published.²

Every book has an author and the Gita is no exception. Modestly, at the end of the work (ch. xviii, 75), the author says, "By Vyasa's grace I heard..." Remembering Vyasa gives a new look to the text and problems which were never before answered or perhaps not even noticed have been answered.

And so for the first time, you get a commentary based on the total scheme in the author's mind. As I watched and noted, Nataraja Guru steadily and consistently effaced himself during the whole treatment of the work. It was like watching the careful cleaning of an old oil painting, and

2. *The Bhagavad Gita* (a sublime Hymn of Dialectics, composed by the antique Sage Bard Vyasa) with general and introductory essays, verse commentary, word notes, Samskrit text and English translation by Nataraja Guru (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1961). Now out of print.

restoring the picture to its original glowing glory, so that, as we went along, the beauty of the original became dazzlingly clear, with all the obscuring dirt and varnish of centuries finally abolished.

The Poetic side

The Gita has been my companion throughout my life. It represents the 'Indian' side of my life, which has been lived in two worlds, one East and one West. In the course of study connected with the guru's translation, I have read dozens of other translations and commentaries, from the Sankara *Bhashya* of over a thousand years ago down to those of the present day. In checking almost every word in Monnier William's enormous encyclopedic Samskrit-English Dictionary, the Gita has also been my main introduction to that old language which seems to have been made for philosophy.

The Bhagavan or Revered One of the Gita is Krishna the Guru, and the whole work of 700 quatrains, in easily remembered verse, is a song or Gita of Krishna the absolutist. Poetry being the highest form of speech is naturally the proper medium for wisdom transmission. The usual metre is one of eight syllables (*Anustubh*), but this is changed to one of eleven syllables (*Tristubh*) when the fervour and numinous mood is intensified.

For those who are keen to taste the poetic melody of the Samskrit original, I would strongly recommend a unique translation intended for those who like to follow the word order. This is *Giitaa, a Samskrit-English Bridge, with the Barriers Removed* by Adeltaa Siitaa Devii, (Adyar, Madras 1955). The doubling of the long vowels such as 'aa' and

'ii' is her method of transliteration. Though odd-looking at first, it works and saves the use of equally odd diacritical marks. But her best achievement is to have been able to retain in English the same syntax as in the Samskrit. Here is a sample of her work (verse ii, 69) :

या	निशा	सर्वभूतानां	
Yaa	nis'aa	sarva-bhutanaam	
That which (is)	night	for all creatures	
तस्यां	जागर्ति	संयमी	
tasyaam	jaagarti	samyamii	
in that	wakes	the thoroughly restrained one.	
यस्यां	जाग्रति	भूतानि	
Yasyaam	jaagrati	bhuutaani	
That in which	wake	creatures	
सा	निशा	पश्यतो	मुनेः
saa	nis'sa	pas'yato	munehh
That (is)	night	for the seeing	silent sage

How to Read the Gita

"What to read" must be supplemented by "How to read" in the case of wisdom texts. The understanding of the Gita especially needs a certain preparation and disposition. It is essential that the reader should be a seeker of enlightenment.

You have to come to the Gita with deep sincerity. When you remember that the giants and geniuses of Indian philosophy have all treated it with veneration for twelve centuries or more, their attitude must surely be given weight, and if they had trust and faith in the author, then

this is worth more than the superficial judgment of modern so-called rationalists and sceptics who, enamoured of ephemeral social needs, would dismiss all philosophy in the name of secularism or humanism, logic, etc.²

There is another obstacle for the Western reader. In the highest philosophy of India a great deal is traditionally understood is taken for granted, and only a few Western scholars get to know its details. It is taken for granted that the reader is a true seeker of wisdom, and in all likelihood the disciple of a guru. He is not just a scholar with academic interests, but a person seriously interested in the subject of wisdom and thorough going emancipation. But when guru-hoods is a taboo topic for most Western scholars, its central position in the Gita will be ignored and the whole work will therefore lose its central cohesion and unity.

It is also taken for granted in India that the seeker has the right qualifications. A drunken surgeon would never be allowed to operate, and even a sober surgeon would be required to wear the regulation sterilized clothes. In Japan, I am informed, artists of the highest class prepare themselves for their painting by burning incense and sitting in meditation in a quiet room for an hour or more.

In the same way the approach to the study of the Gita requires of the reader certain qualifications. These have been described by Sankara in his well-known *Crowning Gem of Discrimination* (*Vivekachudamani*) verses 19-30.

The Four Qualifications

The first qualification is the steadfast capacity of distinguishing between the constant and the ephemeral, between the eternal and the temporal, between the unchang-

ing and the mutable, between the permanent and the transitory, between the real and the apparent, between the absolute and the relative, between the lasting and the passing (*nitya-anitya*).

The second qualification is the abandonment of everything that constitutes that mass of psycho-sensual conditioning which is the relative self, otherwise the ego, which we call the 'I'. This means total detachment from all objects, thoughts, concepts, desires, interests and habits, a regular purging of the entire psychological system (*vairagya*) what the Greeks called *katharsis*.

The third qualification is the acquisition of the six endowments (*Sat sampat*) These are : (1) the calm resting of the mind on the goal to be attained which is enlightenment through an understanding of and identity with the Absolute (*Sama*) ; (2) the checking and turning of the senses away from fixation on objects and concepts (*dama*) ; (3) refusing to allow the attention to be carried off by other interests (*Uparati*) ; (4) the firm endurance of all the troubles incidental to the life of a disciplined seeker, and absence of irritation under the restrictions of transformed or reborn life, and countering all moods of depression and negativity which may arise and make one feel sorry for oneself at leaving the old way of life, in short it means having a certain spiritual courage with no regrets (*Titiksha*) ; (5) an unshakeable confidence, not blind but intelligent, in the affirmation of the Gurus of the past regarding the way and the goal, as well as having full trust in the goodwill, good faith and good intentions of your own Guru, an absolute faith (*Shraddha*) ; and (6) total absorption in the Supreme Absolute, but without the invasion of pre-imagined

conceptions, or the introduction of fanciful ideas (*Sama-dana*).

Lastly but not least, there is the fourth qualification, which is perhaps the most important, pivotal to the whole set. It is to possess a total outright thirst and yearning for freedom from everything that is unreal, an all-out longing for liberation (*Mumukshutva*). This really makes all the rest easy. It is almost identical with *Samnyasa*, the emptying out from the psyche of everything that is conditioned, so that what remains is the unconditioned, formless, nameless and transparent. This enthusiasm for Immortality and Enlightenment must be constantly white hot, undistracted by anything or any person.

Now there are many seekers, but how many have in full measure these qualifications? It looks a formidable set of endowments, but it all becomes easy when there is this powerful determination to be free, whatever the cost.

It is only for such a seeker with such qualifications, that the Gita will be found to be charged with pregnant meaning. It is only then that the Self of the seeker-reader will recognise what Vyasa meant. This recognition is the touch of the Absolute.

Beyond Duality

Vyasa wrote the Gita as a guide for disciples. Arjuna is the disciple and Krishna is the Guru. In ch. ii. 17, Arjuna declares "I am your disciple," which implies that Krishna should be his Guru.

The function of the Guru is to keep the interest of the disciple at a constant pitch of intensity, unwaveringly fixed forever on the goal. The Guru will point out the distractions

which vary from one disciple to another, and hence one of reasons for the need of a spiritual director. The Guru will pull the disciple up again and again as his old habits and conditionings drag him down from the high levels of freedom, pulling him back from the field of fixed notions and conceptual thought, which is the barrier—the razor's edge—between the striving disciple and the break through into the state of enlightenment. The Guru will try to keep the disciple's mind transparently free from holding on to pre-conceived ideas.

Wisdom texts are only a means to an end. Their words are meant to destroy all the words. Therefore, their language is not that of the home, of society, of the shops, of the business world, of empirical science, or of the legal codes. More than half of the Gita uses a language which belongs to the unconditioned Absolute, rich with that type of language which is metaphorical, paradoxical, symbolic, full of parable, intuition, mystical and expressive of the numinous and the wonderful.

Every possible word, even in ordinary relative life, traces itself to the Absolute; it gets its meaning from the Absolute, and still the Absolute is inexhaustible in meaning. New meaning is continuously bursting out from the Absolute. It is known in this aspect as *Sphota*, the flash of understanding which destroys ignorance or nonsense. The Absolute is Meaning itself, which is a deep mystery. The dullness and flatness of the relative is in limiting meaning and in setting up pairs of opposites. Relative good and relative bad have closed sealed-in meanings. But the Absolute-knower takes good-bad together, and likewise all other pairs that are found in the Thesaurus, and bring them

all into unity. The relative is a matter of choice of meanings. The non-dual Absolute does choose. In the last resort one can even say that the undefineable Absolute does not even split itself into "absolute" and "relative," or into materialistic and spiritual, or into Nirvana and Samsara.

Fatal Rival Interests

Therefore, to approach the Gita with a mind attached to any interest other than absolute freedom, is to introduce duality. In effect this would be to reverse and undo the intention of the author Vyasa. It is precisely here that you can locate the main defect of most of the commentators on the Gita. Even Sankara seems to depart from the Absolutist aim when he appears to be concerned with the restoration of a social climate favourable to a special View or *Darshana* of a revalued Vedic pattern.

When we come to the commentators of our own time, the position worsens enormously. With their special interests in politics or in nationalism, writers on the Gita such as Tilak and Gandhi, great in the field of social welfare, because of this very rival interest which is relativistic, are just not qualified to deal with a wisdom text such as the Gita. It would have been far better had they left it alone instead of trying to make it a support for their special ends.

It is the same with religious people. Their pious interests have created grave errors which destroy the pure purpose of Vyasa. For instance, take the popular cheap edition of the Gita published from Gorakpur. When I open it, I find coloured pictures of Krishna playing the flute and a four-armed Krishna as an Avatar of Vishnu. But nowhere in the whole Gita is there any justification for such

religious concepts. The Krishna of the Gita is not the Krishna of Brindavan, and in the eleventh chapter, where Arjuna has a terrifying vision of the Absolute as cosmic time, with "multitudinous arms, stomachs, mouths and eyes" (verse 16), this extremely personal, hypostatic personification is the creation of Arjuna's own projective power or *Maya*-mind. The Guru-disciple dialogue stops at this point and it returns to the pre-dialogue Sanjaya stage. Then, scared at the vision, he himself has called up when Arjuna pleads for a "four-armed" Krishna, his request is refused, for the Krishna who speaks to him in the plain human Guru with two arms like everybody else (ch. xi, 50-51).

No Moral Injunctions

Another philosophical distinction which is taken for granted in Indian thought is the division of all wisdom texts into those concerned with wisdom principles and those concerned with correct behaviour (*Dharma*). Ninety per cent of modern commentators regard the Gita as a guide to social conduct. But it is not so, for it is classified along with the Upanishads and the Brahma-sutras a *Prasthanatraya* (the threefold exposition of finalized wisdom). It belongs, therefore, to the division called *Sruti*, "what is heard directly from the Guru" and not a work dealing with right and wrong behaviour (*Dharma-Adharma*) and called *Smriti*, "what is to be remembered" with laws and rules for society. A *Sruti*-text such as the Gita deals with individual emancipation, while a *Smriti*-text such as the *Manu-smriti*, deals with the maintenance of a social establishment. Although this position of the Gita as a *Sruti* should be perfectly clear, it is usually conveniently forgotten.

“The fire of wisdom” the Guru Krishna informs Arjuna, “reduces all work to ashes” (iv, 37). All work, all *Karma* which must necessarily include *Dharma* and *Adharma* (good and bad forms of behaviour) as these are sub-divisions of *Karma*.

There can be no doubt that the Gita is a work dealing with the attainment of absolutist enlightenment. In what is called the colophon, the inscription placed at the end of each chapter, the Gita is thus ascribed :

“Thus in the auspicious Song of the Revered One, in that wisdom spoken in close intimate converse by the side of Guru (Upanishads), in the science of the Absolute (*Brahmavidya*) in the text-book of non-dual or unitive realization (*Yogasastra*), in the Guru-Disciple dialogue (*Samvada*), this chapter is called ...”

Although the Yoga of the Gita is described as having the highest ethical character, including patience, self-restraint, calmness, non-hurting (*Ahimsa*), balance, contentment, austerity, straight-forwardness, loyal support of the Guru, purity, steadfastness, compassion to beings, forgiveness, inoffensive speech, gentleness, etc. (x, 4-5 : xiii, 7 : xvi, 1-3 ; and xvii. 14), these qualities are for the sake of freedom from the relative, and are not intended for teaching social morality. The detachment of the seeker from society and from social commitments is revealed quite plainly in the final verses of advice or instructions :

The Lord dwells, O Arjuna, in the heart region of all beings, whirling all beings as if mounted on a machine by the power of the conceptualizing relativizing principle (*Maya*).

To Him only, in every mood, go for shelter, O

Bharata (Arjuna)! by His grace you shall obtain that neutral state of peace, supreme, everlasting.

Thus to the wisdom has been declared by Me (the Guru), more secret than all that is secret ; scrutinizing all this, omitting nothing DO AS YOU LIKE.

Listen again to My supreme word, the most secret of all ; because you are firmly beloved of Me (the Absolute Self), therefore, I will tell you what is for your good.

Become one in mind with Me : become My devotee : become a sacrificer to Me : make salutations to Me ; you shall come to Me alone ; I promise you in truth ; you are dear to Me.

HAVING ABANDONED ALL SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS (*Dharma*) to Me, the one refuge, go. I shall liberate you from all sins. Do not despair (xviii, 61-66).

These are bold words—"do as you like" and "having abandoned all social obligations." To turn to the Gita for support of social or religious programmes is absurd. Instead of listening to politicians and religious preachers on the Gita, people should listen to Gurus, and here to Vyasa himself. The ends of society and wisdom that leads to spiritual emancipation and immortality are two vastly different things. Can these desperate ends meet ? Yes, they can, provided the almost impossible situation arose of a society with a philosopher-king, the dream which haunted Plato, and mentioned in Indian *puranas* as the Royal Seer, the *Rajarishi*.

Transcending the Vedas

Having thus clarified the position of the Gita as a work

concerned with absolute emancipation and the wisdom associated with that end, is not astonishing that the famous politician-scholar Radhakrishnan should, in the very first sentence of his book on the Gita, states "The Bhagavad Gita is more a religious classic than a philosophical treatise?" I can only assume this error to be due to his religious conditioning. To this must also be due his frequent translation of *Brahman* (the neutral gender Absolute) as 'God'.

The attitude of Vyasa to religion is unequivocal. In chapter ii, 42-46, he speaks witheringly of "the flowery speech" of the Veda and of "desire-made selves" having heaven as their goal, securing only more rounds of birth, despite all their ritual observances "aiming at enjoyment and domination." Being unsettled, such Vedic-attached persons never attain to that contemplative peace known as *Samadhi*. Therefore, the disciple understanding that the Vedas are limited to the conditioning of the three modes of nature, known as the *Gunas* (the passionate or energetic, *Rajas*; the dull and torpid, *Tamas*; and the pure and pleasant, *Sativa*) should rise above them, and should also be free from the relativity of all pairs of opposites pertaining to the *Gunas* which constitute the duality of vision which is the enemy of unitive insight. From all this Vedic conditioning the seeker is advised to dissociate himself, and be "constantly fixed in the Real, free from all desire for acquisition or security, and completely self-possessed"—in brief should follow the Way of the Absolute. Finally the passage ends by saying that for a Brahmin of wisdom the Vedas are as much use as a well might be in a land completely covered with water.

Again, in Ch. xv, 1-4, the Gita speaks of the sacred fig tree with roots above (that is, in the mind or heaven), and with branches below (i.e., in the sense objective world) "whose leaves are sacred verses" belonging to the Vedic religion. This tree, which represents the entire psycho-physical entity which we call the personal conscious self or 'I' is considered as the enemy of enlightenment. And that is why the Gita says that before you take one step on the wisdom path of no return, this tree, roots, branches, leaves with vedic songs and guna-nourished branches, must be ruthlessly cut down by the weapon of complete detachment (*Asanga-sastrena*) from everything this tree represents.

Those who make distinctions on religious grounds based on the cleanliness of the Brahmin and the dirtiness of the Pariah, have no support in the Gita, for Vyasa distinctly says (v. 8) that the wise see the same "in regard to a Brahmin endowed with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant and even a dog, as also one who cooks dog (meat) for food."

In short, those who follow the Absolute, those whose aim is full liberation from the relative, will be like the sun, free from religious scruples, quite indifferent to what its light touches, making no religious distinctions between clean and unclean, holy and unholy, Brahmin and Pariah. The very next verse makes this clear.

"Free from blemish and unitively balanced is indeed the Absolute; therefore, such persons whose minds are balanced in sameness, who have even here (in the relative world) vanquished the urge to create, they are fixed in the Absolute."

The word creation (*Sargo*) can cover theories,

distinctions, concepts, schemes, organizations, religious philosophical systems, caste doctrines, works of art, inventions, and all the social, biological, personal or collective structures possible under the term.

All can attain to the supreme goal, such is the verdict of Vyasa stated in the ninth chapter. As long as the seekers have an absolute devotion, whether criminals (verse 30) or women, the lowest caste, the Sudras, or the business caste, the Vaishyas (Verse 32), they are assured of attaining to the supreme.

Revaluation

Properly read and studied, the Gita is bound to be seen as a revolutionary revaluation of the whole of Indian spirituality.

It is well-known that Swami Vivekananda lectured and wrote about four Yogas, *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Jnana*, and *Raja*. These happen to be the titles of four of the eighteen chapters on the Gita. But what about the other fourteen chapters each of which is called a Yoga? What about the first which is called *Arjuna Vishada Yoga*? Or the last which is called *Samnyasa Yoga*? And what does Yoga itself mean in the Gita? Is it to be taken in the same sense as understood by Patanjali, author of the *Yoga-Sutras*? To answer these questions we must digress a little.

In the Gita (v., 4-5) the author declares:

“That *Samhkya* and *Yoga* are distinct (and different) only children say, not the well-informed; one well established in one obtains the result of both.

“That position obtained by the Samkhyas, that by the Yogis is also reached. As one the Samkhyas, or that by

the Yoga way, he who— seeshe sees.”

Samkhya (literally, “enumerated together”) is a rational system of philosophy founded by the sage Kapila which deals with the twenty-five *Tattvas* (principle or categories), the first being *Purusha* (lit. what is human; the person) and the other twenty-four being classified under manifested nature or *Prakriti* (what is made before, the given). Samkhya does not postulate a God; it is purely rational, but unlike modern rationalism or Humanism, Samkhya does not deny primal existence and the importance of the human spirit as person or a distinct category of reality. All they say is that spirit cannot be described, being beyond objective description and analysis.

As a system Yoga has as its oldest text that of Patanjali. It has its end, the lonely mergence (*Kaivalyam*) of the individual with God (*Isvara*).

Brahmavidya (Science of the Absolute) as Vyasa presents it, includes all the systems of philosophy (*Darshanas*); he revalues the meaning of both *Purusha* and Yoga, viewing them from an absolutist rather than from a relativist stance. The *Pursha* becomes *Purushottama* (the Paramount Person or Supreme Spirit, i.e., the Absolute) and Yoga becomes a universal sameness of vision or understanding, in which the duality of otherness or difference is abolished. The Yogi is one who sees everything in the light of the Absolute. Thus any view which can be called a total world view which includes everything, which is unified is worthy to be called a Yoga. Hence the chapters of the Gita, each one of which gives a distinct philosophical view of an absolutist character, are called “Yogas”. The first chapter of the Gita, which as we said, is called *Arjuna Vishada Yoga*, “the

Unitive Philosophic view of Arjuna on his State of Despondency" although pessimistic, is still a valid view because it is unified and so a yogic view.

Thus the first chapter, usually glossed over, and sometimes omitted altogether (*e. g.*, by Isherwood-Prabhavanada in their translation, and by Sankara in his commentary) is of as much importance in the whole scheme of the Gita, as any other chapter.

The traditional *Yoga* of Patanjali with its breathing exercises and implied various *Asanas* or postures and its "stages" is not mentioned in the Gita. Instead, a revised interpretation of the word *Yoga* is given, consistent with the non-dual absolute, *e. g.* :

"Yoga is said to be sameness" (ii, 48).

"Yoga is unitive intelligence in action" in 50).

"That let him know as *Yoga*—disaffiliation with the context of suffering" (vi. 23).

The Canvas and the Painting

When Nataraja Guru once spoke to Narayana Guru about the Gita and suggested that the background of the Mahabharata war, the epic story, was just the canvas on which Vyasa had painted his teaching, Narayana Guru said this view should be widely known. I have twice already mentioned this analogy of the restoration of a fine old painting, bearing the Guru's words in mind.

Many readers of the Gita, instead of seeing the picture, muddle their understanding by giving attention to the old canvas on which the picture is painted. The canvas has really nothing to do with the picture which illustrates the perennial wisdom. The canvas belongs to time but the

message of the picture to Eternity. The Vedic, Ritualistic, Semi-historical, Caste-conscious Canvas of India, ancient or modern, with its tribalistic gods, is merely the framework and the canvas. If people think the Gita supports these transient historical features including caste, despite what we have quoted above, they are mixing up the medium with the message. In fact, they are hanging the picture with its face to the wall.

Any writing on philosophy today may take into account, for the sake of explanation, the prevailing mental make-up of the modern reader. The writer may relate subjects such as thermonuclear weapons, ideological warfare, nationalism, theory of evolution, existentialism, the Roman Catholic Church, the Negro question and birth control. This is the canvas of today. The writer may bring in idealism, the unity of mankind, ecological protection of life, better systems of society, drop-outs and the exodus of people from the stinking cities, etc.

But all these things, bad or good, belong to the relative world of *Samsara* and even the best of them, the most *Sattvik*, are hindrances in the end to the seeking Self in its quest for full liberation, since they all belong to the *Guna*-complex of psychophysical nature. They are obstacles to Enlightenment.

Now, in the same way, the Guru Krishna is bound to admit the existence of the *Guna*-factors and the state of human thought at the remote antiquity of the period of the Mahabharata. That *Samsara* world included not only the Rishis and Gurus who were free from caste (for instance,) but caste itself as an existing though relative fact. Like everything else in the phenomenal world, caste as well as

ideals of equality, have emerged from the *Maya*-process of the Absolute. It is all part of the shadow side of the painting. The Absolute is at once the maker and the undoer of these bubbles in the ever-flowing river of time. We have the choice (do what you like) of getting involved in history or of being free from time and Samsara and becoming, remembering, what we are, Immortals.

Wonder is All

Furthermore, it takes a very keen mystical eye to be able to see that not only caste and thermonuclear weapons, but also even pious and worthy ideals must, in the end, be discarded and placed where they belong, in the field of non-enlightenment, and to see that the seeker, whose end is emancipation, must rise above both the pleasant and the unpleasant. They all come under the category of action (*Karma*). As Sankara declares, "Let people quote the scriptural texts (*Sastra*), and sacrifice to the gods; let them perform rituals and worship the divinties, the fact remains that there is no freedom without unitive Enlightenment with the Self, no, not even in the duration of a hundred "Days of Brahma (periods of cosmic appearance and withe drawal)" and "The realization of truth is brought about by discrimination (asking oneself what lasts and what doesn't) and not in the least by ten millions of actions" (*Vivekachudamani*, 6 and 11).

The distinction between the actual dialogue between the Guru Krishna and the disciple Arjuna, which is the solid, main feature of the Gita and the frame and canvas of the painting which belongs to the epic of the Mahabharata, with characters which are of the part of the literary structur-

of the composition, such as the blind king Dhritarashtra and his aide Samjaya whose part it is to describe what is happening, has also to be noted.

Although as I said at the beginning, the Gita has spread everywhere in the world, Vyasa was in no doubt about the extreme rarity of finding anyone who would understand what he wrote, and more than that, follow the Way of Enlightenment. In vii, 3, he says "Among a thousand men which one strives for transparent perfection? And likewise, among the striving, the successful ones, which one knows Me (the Absolute Self) according to true principles?"

Alas, in the end, without the properly endowed mystical sense, which is not to be obtained except through grace of circumstances and by what is called chance or providence, or through some mysterious spiritual inheritance, one must agree with Vyasa when he sings his Gita. his song of the Absolute in verse ii, 29 :

As Wonder one person This (Absolute) sees :
 And also as Wonder another one speaks ;
 Of This as a Wonder another one hears,
 Yet even through hearing none knows This at all.

The Enneads of Plotinus

My next choice in recommended wisdom literature is *The Enneads of Plotinus* (205-270 A. D.). The word "Enneads" comes from the Greek, and simply means "the nines." Plotinus entrusted the publication of his writings to his disciple Porphyry. There were fifty-four discourses and these were arranged by Porphyry in six collections, each

containing nine lectures.

But why, you may ask, in turning to a work from Pagan Europe, choose *The Enneads* rather than the works of Plato, Pythagoras or Aristotle, etc.? Why choose a writer who lived nearly eight centuries later than these more familiar Greek philosophers who were ancient and classical even in the time of Plotinus?

Last of the Great Gurus of Europe

In the first place, Plotinus represented the best of all the Greek wisdom teaching of Europe, whether Pythagorean, Eleatic, Stoic, Cynic, Socratic, Platonic, Aristotelian, etc. Secondly, he was not a mere synthesizer. He was an attained mystic and yogi, with immense intellectual power, of sustained eloquence, and his thought always reverted to the Principle of the Absolute, in the same way that the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Upanishads* refer always to *Brahman*, or the Chinese *Tao Te Ching* to the *Tao*.

In the third place, there is no better introduction to the finalized living values of the Gurus of the ancient Pagan Mediterranean World. We know from his biography that Plotinus lived the philosophic life, and from the mode of his writing you are bound to see that he could never have written as he did, unless he knew from direct experience, what he was writing about. His style is a very distinct variety of the universal *lingua mystica*.

He conformed to the ancient traditions, and set up his Ashram or Gurukula near Rome, with dozens of disciples, old and young. To read Plotinus is to plunge into the vast ocean of Pagan wisdom reaching back even further than Pythagoras, perhaps even to Indian or to ancient Egyptian

or other sources. Into his presentaion of the *philosophia perennis*, he wove all the various strands, and gave the whole a revaluation, thus providing himself to be the equal of his great predecessors. Every sentence he wrote is charged with philosophical exaltation. And by the grace of the Absolute, he was favoured with the back-room work of Porphyry.

As Indian Samnyasins are supposed to do, he had cut himself off completely from all family relationships, and not even his closest disciples knew of his origins or place of birth. He was so averse to the personal that he would have his portrait drawn. "It is bad enough," he said, "to be enclosed in this body image which nature has produced. It is therefore, far from desirable to leave to posterity, an image of this image." But Porphyry (who had the mind or soul of a Bhakta) got the best artist of the time to sit at the discourses and then drew the portrait from memory. Of course, like thousands of such historical material, no trace of the portrait exists today. In parenthesis, Plotinus was perhaps right, when we see more respect given to the pictures and photographs of Gurus rather than to their wisdom.

Some modern researchers believe he was an Egyptian, born in Lycopolis in 205 A. D. At any rate, according to Porphyry, when Plotinus was twenty-seven, "he was caught by the passion for philosophy" in Alexandria.

Meeting with the Guru Ammonius Saccus

Something must be said about this key city in the destinies of Europe. It was in Alexandria that the battle for the mind of the European was to be fought in the fifth

century. It was here in 415 that the Church showed its true character as a power-seeking establishment, signalized dramatically and horribly by the savage murder of the noble Pagan woman philosopher, Hypatia, in a church, by a mob of mad monks, inspired by their leader, Bishop Cyril. This was a mere foretaste of the horrors to come as the Christians reached out for absolute power. Only a century later the Emperor Justinian made it a mortal offence to swerve from the dogmas of the Church. Temples were either destroyed or turned into Churches. All the Guru centres were forcibly closed and their inmates driven into exile or underground. It was the end of guruhood and its wisdom in Europe, as these things are known in Asia and in India particularly. It was a tragedy which has made the European a distorted personality, and barred him from true philosophy.

This historical and psychological fact makes Plotinus important, for he was the heir most notable exponent of that precious wisdom and Guru tradition which the Christians either abolished or sent deep underground. Christian writers on Plotinus, such as the Protestant Dean Inge or the Jesuit Paul Henry tell you nothing of all this. They deny guruhood as something Pagan and Oriental, words which to Christians are terms of abuse.

In the second and third centuries, Alexandria was still the meeting place of all people of the East and West. Its population of half a million included Jews in great numbers, Greeks and Gauls, Romans, Phoenicians, Africans, Egyptians, Persians, Syrians and Indians. Most came to trade, but Alexandria had also the reputation of being a city of scientists and philosophers. Four centuries before

the time of Plotinus, Alexandria had been the birth-place of Eratosthenes who measured the circumference and diameter of the earth to within fifty miles of the figures known today; and of Euclid and many others. It had its famous university, the Museion, and its still more famous library with half a million manuscripts. Both were destroyed by fire in 48 B. C. when Julius Caesar entered the city. Antony, Caesar's successor to the affections of Cleopatra, attempted to make good the loss by giving her the library of the king of Pergamus, which contained 2,00,000 manuscripts.

Here then, in Alexandria, we find the young seeker of wisdom in the year 232. Porphyry sums up the bare facts as follows :

“He (Plotinus) was directed to the most highly reputed professors to be found at Alexandria ; but he used to come from their lectures saddened and discouraged. A friend to whom he opened his heart divined his temperamental craving and suggested Ammonius Saccus, whom he had not yet tried. Plotinus went ; heard a lecture, and exclaimed to his comrade : ‘This was the man I was looking for.’

“From that day he followed Ammonius continuously; and under his guidance made such progress in philosophy that he became eager to investigate the Persian methods and the system adopted among the Indians. It happened that the Emperor Gordian was at that time preparing his campaign against Persia ; Plotinus joined the army and went on the expedition. He was then thirty-eight, for he had passed eleven entire years under Ammonius. When Gordian was killed in Mesopotamia, it was only with great difficulty that Plotinus came off safe to Antioch. At forty, in the

reign of Philip, he settled in Rome.”¹

Who was this Guru, Ammonius Saccus? According to the latest investigations, he was born about the year 160 A. D. He was an Alexandrian porter (*saccus*=sack-bearer) supposed to be of Christian parentage “who lapsed into Paganism” as we are informed by *Everyman's Classical Dictionary* (1961-Ed.). He left no writings and much of his methods and teachings was apparently secret. Perhaps he had been to India, or had Indian teachers, for why, otherwise, should his pupil have an interest in going to India? Ammonius' disciples included famous persons such as Origen the Christian, and Longinus, the greatest literary critic of his day.

Plotinus' Disciples

Porphyry gives us a clear picture of the Gurukula or Ashram near Rome;

“Plotinus had a large following. Notable among the more zealous students, really devoted to philosophy, was Amelius of Tuscany (possibly an Etruscan,) whose family name was Gentilianus. Amelius preferred to call himself Amerius, changing L for R, because, as he explained, it suited him better to be named from *Amereia*, Unification, than from *Amelia*, Indifference.

“The group also included Paulinus, a doctor of Scythopolis whom Amelius used to call Mikkalos in allusion to his blundering habit of mind.

“Among close personal friends was Eustochius of Alexandria, also a doctor, who came to know Plotinus to-

1. The quotations are from *Plotinus, The Enneads* translated by Stephen MacKenna (Pantheon Books, New York).

wards the end of his life and attended him until his death' Eustochius consecrated himself exclusively to Plotinus. system and became a veritable philosopher.

"Then there was Zoticus, at once critic and poet, who had amended the text of Antimachus' works and is the author of an exquisite poem upon the Atlantis story ; his sight failed, and he died a little before Plotinus, as also did Paulinus.

"Another friend was Zethos, an Arabian by descent, who married a daughter of Ammonius' friend Theodosius. Zethos, too, was a doctor. Plotinus was deeply attached to him and was always trying to divert him from the political career in which he stood high. Plotinus was on the most familiar terms with him, and used to stay with him at his country place, six miles from Minturnae, a property which had formerly belonged to Castricius Firmus.

"Castricius was excelled by none of the group in appreciation of the finer side of life ; he venerated Plotinus; he devoted himself in the most faithful comradeship to Amelius in every need and was on all matters as loyal to myself as though I were his own brother.

"There was another example of a politician venerating the philosopher. There were also among Plotinus' hearers not a few members of the Senate, amongst whom Marcellus Orontius and Sabinilius showed the greatest assiduity in philosophical studies.

"Another senator, Rogatianus, advanced to such detachment from political ambitions that he gave up all his property, dismissed all his slaves, renounced every dignity, and on the point of taking up his praetorship, the lictors already at the door, refused to come out or have anything

to do with the office. He even abandoned his own house, spending his time here and there at his friends' and acquaintances, sleeping and eating with them and taking at that, only one meal every other day. He had been a victim of gout, carried in a chair, but this new regime of abstinence and abnegation restored his health : he had been unable to stretch out his hands ; he came to use them as freely as men living by manual labour. Plotinus took a great liking to Rogotianus, and frequently praised him very highly, holding him up as a model to those aiming at the philosophical life.

"Then there was Serapion, an Alexandrian who began life as a professional orator and later took to the study of philosophy, but was never able to conquer the vices of avarice and usury.

"I myself, Porphyry of Tyre, was one of Plotinus' very closest friends, and it was to me he entrusted the task of revising his writings.

"Several women were greatly attached to him, amongst them Gemina, in whose house he lived, and her daughter also called Gemina after the mother, and Amphiclea, the wife of Ariston, son of Iamblichus ; all three devoted themselves assiduously to philosophy."

A Greek Gurukula in Rome

"Not a few men and women of position, on the approach of death, had left their boys and girls, with all their property, in his care, feeling that with Plotinus for guardian the children would be in holy hands. His house therefore was filled with lads and lasses, among them Potamon, in whose education he took such interest as often to hear the boy recite verses of his own composition.

“He always found time for those that came to submit returns of the children’s property, and he looked very closely to the accuracy of the accounts: ‘Until the young people take to philosophy,’ he used to say, ‘their fortunes and revenues must be kept intact for them.’ And yet all this labour and thought over the worldly interests of so many people never interrupted, during waking hours, his intention towards the Supreme.

“The Emperor Gallienus and his wife Salonina greatly honoured and venerated Plotinus, who thought to turn their friendly feeling to some good purpose. In Campania there had once stood, according to tradition, a City of Philosophers, a ruin now. Plotinus asked the Emperor to rebuild this city and to make over the surrounding district to the new-founded state: the population was to live under Plato’s laws: the city was to be called Platonopolis; and Plotinus undertook to settle down there with his associates. He would have had his way without more ado but that opposition at court, prompted by jealousy, spite or some such paltry motive, put an end to the plan.

“At the Conferences he showed the most remarkable power of going to the heart of the subject, whether in exposition or in explanation, and his phrasing was apt...When he was speaking his intellect visibly illuminated his face: always of winning presence, he became at these times still more engaging: a slight moisture gathered on his forehead; he radiated benignity.

“He was always ready to entertain objections as he was powerful in meeting them. At one time, I myself kept interrogating him during three days as how the soul is associated with the body, and he continued explaining; a

man called Thaumasius entered in the midst of our discussions : the visitor was more interested in the general drift of the system than in particular points, and said he wished to hear Plotinus expounding some theory as he would in a set thesis, but that he could not endure Porphyry's questions and answers : Plotinus asked, 'But if we cannot first solve the difficulties Porphyry raises what could go into the treatise ?'

"He followed his own path rather than that of tradition but in his writings both the Stoic and Peripatetic doctrines are sunk ; Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is condensed in them, all but entire.

"He had a thorough theoretical knowledge of Geometry, Mechanics, Optics and Music, though it was not in his temperament to go practically into these subjects.

"At the Conferences he used to have treatises by various authors read aloud...but it was far from his way to follow any of these authors blindly ; he took a personal, original view, applying Ammonius' method to the investigation of every problem."

When Plotinus was over sixty, he contracted diphtheria. He refused all medicines and, being a vegetarian, would have nothing that involved bloodshed. In his last days he left Rome for Campania, where he stayed in the property of his disciple Zethos who had died. Porphyry was in Sicily but he tells of the last moments of Plotinus as related by Eustochius. Eustochius was late in arriving, and when he did come, Plotinus said, "I have been a long time waiting for you ; I am striving to give back the Divine in myself to the Divine in the All." As he spoke, a snake crept under the bed on which he lay and slipped away into

a hole in the wall ; at the same moment Plotinus died.

The influence of Plotinus has been enormous. Porphyry (230-301) had Iamblichus of Syria (died 330) as his most important disciple. Iamblichus in turn, had several disciples (the Emperor Julian, Dexippus, Sallustius and Thermistius among them). Plutarch was the most distinguished disciple of Dexippus, and the most renowned of Plutarch's disciples (411-485) which brings us within fifty years of the end of all public Pagan philosophy in Europe, with the terrible ban of the Christian Justinian.

Ecstasy and intellectual power

Philosophic greatness is always recognised by the combination of mysticism and intellectual power. You can see this in the Buddha, Hui Neng, Vyasa, Nagarjuna, Eckhart, Spinoza, and in our own time, in Narayana Guru. Sarkara, I feel, is weak in mysticism, and many of the ancient South Indian sages, such as Tayumanavar are weak in intellectual expression. Plotinus unmistakably belongs to those in whom both endowments or temperaments were strong to an exceptional degree. The danger has been that people in most cases at any rate in Europe, concentrate on the intellectual part, on what is seen as a system or a doctrine. They stop there, forgetting that all intellection, argument, logic, rational and causal explanations and conclusions have finally to be transcended and that they are in fact secondary to the primary aim or end which transcends the intellect. Wittgenstein (1889-1951) at the end of his *Tractatus-Philosophicus* clearly declared the limitations of the concept-forming or language-using mind :

“ My propositions serve as elucidations in the following

way : any one who understands me eventually recognises them as nonsensical, when he uses them—as steps—to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.)

“He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright.”

“What we cannot speak about, we must consign to silence.”¹

The debt of the Christians, and later, the Islamic Sufis to Plotinus is enormous. The Rev. Sidney Spencer writes : “No single man outside the Bible has exerted, directly or indirectly, so great an influence as Plotinus on the thought of the Christian mystics.”²

We can go back to St. Augustine, the Father of Christian theology, who lived two centuries later than Plotinus, for his acknowledgment : “The utterance of Plato, the most pure and bright in all philosophy, scattering the clouds of error, has shone forth most of all in Plotinus, who has been deemed so like his master, that one might think them contemporaries, if the length of time between them did not compel us to say that in Plotinus Plato lived again.”³

Evelyn Underhill, author of a classic on Mysticism, writes : “Plotinus possessed transcendental genius of a high order, and was consumed by a burning passion for the Absolute ; and the importance of his work lies in the degree in which his intellectual constructions are made the vehicle

1. *Tractatus-Philosophicus* by Wittgenstein, German-English edition, p. 151 (Humanities Press, Inc, New York).

2. *Mysticism in World Religions* p. 159 (Penguin).

3. *Contra Academicos*, 3. 18.

of mystical experience. His disciple Porphyry has left it on record that on four occasions he saw his master rapt in ecstatic union with 'The One.'"¹

Where all is at Peace

In Plotinus, however, there were no wild visions or pathological exaggerations. With him everything is calm. As Dean Inge wrote, "There is not the slightest trace of hysterical emotion in Plotinus." :

As proof of this, here are the words of Plotinus. He is speaking of the seeker who has "the faculty for the inquiry, the eye for the object proposed" :

"That great soul must stand pictured before another soul, one not mean, a soul that has become worthy to look, emancipate from the lure, from all that binds its fellows in bewitchment, holding itself in quietude. Let not merely the enveloping body be at peace, body's turmoil stilled, but all that lies around, earth at peace, and sea at peace, and air and the very heavens. Into that heaven, all at rest, let the great soul be conceived to roll inward at every point, penetrating, permeating, from all sides pouring in its light. As the rays of the sun throwing their brilliance upon a louring cloud make it gleam all gold, so the soul entering the material expanse of the heavens has given life, has given immortality : what was abject it has lifted up : and the heavenly system, moved now in endless motion by the soul that leads it in wisdom, has become a living and blessed thing ; the soul

1. *Mysticism*, p. 455 (Meridian Books, New York.).

2. Quoted p. 6, *The System of Plotinus* (Shrine of Wisdom, London).

domiciled within, it takes worth where, before the soul, it was stark body—clay and water—or rather, the blankness of matter, the absence of Being, and, as an author (Homer, *Iliad*, xx. 65) says, “the execration of the Gods”¹

Scholars and translation

Before leaving this essential background and coming to the Plotinian teaching, something should be said as a warning to the reader about the difficulties which all scholars find in translating the *Enneads*.

Porphyry tells us that Plotinus had poor eye-sight and “could not bear to go back on his work even for one re-reading”; and that he was not in the least concerned about spelling or literary rules. His method was to think out the whole design and write “at one jet all that he had stored as though he were copying from a book.” He could be interrupted, but went back to the work “as if no distraction had occurred.” More than a word of praise should be given to faithful Porphyry, who not only did his work well, but without him, there would be no complete *Enneads* at all.

What may be somewhat confusing for the reader is that the fifty-four discourses are not a series of step-by-step statements of doctrine. They are not chapters in one work of consecutive exposition. They are demonstration of significant points or topics. Each essay or lecture presupposes the whole teaching. This has always the Absolute or the return to The One (*to hen* in Greek) as its reference. It is taken for granted that the reader is set upon the goal of wisdom-attainment or of union with the Absolute. Plotinus is never tired of saying that we can only understand him by

1. *Enneads*, V. i. 2 (MacKenna translation).

following him and making his experience our own. In short, the *Enneads* are intended for disciples in the full Pagan Guru-Sishya context. But, since this feature is the one precious principle which has been lost to the European because of being wilfully suppressed by the Christian establishment, the translators are few and only one in English, Stephen MacKanna, by wilfully devoting half of his lifetime to the task, would seem to have attained to the spirit of the original.

Plotinus requires the reader's or the translator's unbroken attention, always at a white-hot level of exalted *a priori* logic. The translations (in part) by Thomas Taylor (1834), K. S. Guthrie (1918), and A. H. Armstrong (now being made for the Loeb Library series) do not seem to me to come up to the grade of MacKanna.

Stephen MacKanna (1872-1934) who came from an impoverished middle-class Irish family, became the European representative of *The New York World* by the time he was thirtyfive. He came upon two versions of the Plotinus' text, one in what was then St. Petersburg, the other in Moscow, when he was reporting the abortive 1905 revolution. Then and there he decided to devote the rest of his life to the translation of the *Enneads*. Twenty years of labour went into the task, but he kept on despite poverty and ill-health. In the end, he got the patronage of a rich man, Sir Ernest Debenham, and the assistance of the scholar B. S. Page. When he had done his work he felt as he said that it was "worth a life," and anyone who reads him will certainly agree. It was finished in 1930. It is one of the few great translations of all time. MacKanna was in total rapport with his author. The work first appeared in a

luxurious Medici edition of four sumptuous volumes (his patron's wish), but it is now available in a single volume edition (Pantheon Books, York).

MacKenna caught the ecstatic flight of Plotinus' thought, and as the poet AE said, there are long shapely passages which "keep their upward flight, like great slow-moving birds."

Having now placed Plotinus in his personal and historical perspective, let us turn to the *Enneads* themselves and their wisdom-content.

The Teaching

Readers of the *Enneads* may have their own choice of his lectures, preferring one to another. In each of the fifty-four tractates the whole philosophy is implied.

Some knowledge of the Indian Advaita is an advantage in appreciating the teaching of Plotinus. There are many parallels to note, and this has an East-West Pagan charm of its own.

This likeness has been noticed by Professor Walter T. Stace who writes that the Mysticism of Plotinus "has a markedly Indian tinge," and "belongs as much to the east as to the West." He goes on to say "the Vedanta and the Plotinian philosophy stand together as two different versions of manifestationism, against the creationism of the theistic West." The better word would have been emanationism. Both Hindu and Greek have, instead of linear creation with its teleological purpose, the notion of immediate projection with cyclic return.

Stace continues: "To say there is no duality of subject and object in the mystical union with God is to say that

there is, at the time of union, no distinction between the soul and God. This is true of the mysticism of the Advaitism and it is true of Plotinus. But by the orthodox Christian and Islamic theologians it is regarded as the heresy of pantheism. It was of this that Meister Eckhart was accused it is important to see on which side of the dividing line Plotinus stands. He stands here, as in so many other matters, with the dominant trend of Indian Mysticism, and not with the West.”¹

Stace means the Christianized West, but the real West has a history and philosophy much longer in duration than the thousand-year-old Church theological dogmas. I find it most extraordinarily pathetic that these exponents of philosophy feel they must ever be on the side of the Church and never have an approving word for the pre-Christian or Pagan European. Despite praise for Pagan Plato or Plotinus, they never say they are better philosophers or superior to the dogmatists of Christian Theology. The climate of the Church establishment, its centuries of political and social power, personal and collective, and the fear it has cultivated, turns them into intellectual cowards.

Plotinus himself was aware of the souped-up doctrines of the Christians. He accuses them (II. ix. 6) of inventing a jargon and a piled-up terminology to conceal their debt to the ancient Greek philosophy.

Plotinus as a guide

In all his writing, Plotinus is bent upon a single objective to lead the disciple or seeker to self-understanding and

1. *The Teachings of the Mystics*, W. T. Stace, pp. 110 and 122-123 (Mentor).

self-realization. He quotes from Plato's *Epistle VII*, 341-D¹ "Not to be told; not to be written." Plotinus says "In our writing and telling we are but urging towards it; out of discussion we call to vision; to those desiring to see, we point the path; our teaching is of the road and the travelling; the seeing must be the very act of one that has made this choice." (*Enneads VI*, xi, 4).

He repeatedly warns his readers of the danger of breaking the unity of the Real by words and reasoning, and thus introducing duality. All knowledge is dual and must be surpassed—"In knowing, soul or mind abandons its unity; it cannot remain a simplex; knowing is taking account of things; that accounting is multiple; the mind, thus plunging into number and multiplicity departs from unity; knowing and knowable must all be left aside; every object of thought, even the highest, we must pass by, for all that is good is later than This and derives from This as from the sun all the light of day" (*Enneads*, VI. ix., 4).

This is a clear exposition of what in Indian philosophy is understood as the need for abolishing the three-fold knowledge situation of subject-object-meaning known as *triputi*. The Absolute cannot be geometrized, pictured or put into words. It is there as the Self when all manner of thought, pictured or reasoned, is left behind. Extreme shock methods of teaching this wisdom are given in Zen Buddhism. "The very idea of the Buddha as a concept needs to be abolished. Kill the Buddha (concept)" is the rough order of the Zen masters.

Plotinus says this in a more gentle fashion, but none-

¹ See *Plato's Epistles*, translated Glen. R. Morrow, p. 237 (The Library of Liberal Arts, Bobbs-Merrill, New York).

the-less firm and rigorous.

The Choir

In writing of this Self-knowledge Plotinus is most brilliant, even if he has to strain language to do so. Here are passages which are typical of his style and method :

“ We are always before the Supreme, but we do not always look ; thus a choir, singing, set in due order about the conductor, may turn away from that centre to which all should attend ; let it but face aright and it sings with beauty, present effectively. We are ever before the Supreme-cut off is utter dissolution, we can no longer be but we do not always attend ; when we look our term is attained ; this is rest ; this is the end of singing ill ; effectively before Him, we lift a choral song full of God.” (*Enneads*, VI.ix.9)

“ We have not been cut away ; we are not separate, what though the body-nature has closed about us to press us to itself : we breathe and hold our ground because the Supreme does not give and pass but gives on for ever, so long as it remains what it is.

“ Our being is the fuller for our turning Thither ; this is our prosperity ; to hold aloof is loneliness and lessening. Here is the soul's peace outside of evil, refuge taken in the place clean of wrong ; here it has its Act, its true knowing ; here it is immune. Here is living, the true : that of today. all living apart from Him, is but a shadow, a mimicry, Life in the Supreme is the native activity of Intellect (Greek *Nous*, equivalent of Sanskrit *Chit*), in virtue of that silent converse it brings forth the gods, brings forth beauty, brings forth righteousness, brings forth all moral good : for all these, the soul is pregnant when it has been filled

with God. This state is its first and its final, because from God it comes, its good lines There and, once turned to God again, it is what it was. Life here, with the things of earth, is a sinking, a failing of the wing." (*Enneads*, VI. ix. 9).

Non-Duality

"But how comes the soul not to keep that ground?"

"Because it has not yet escaped wholly; but there will be the time of vision unbroken, the self hindered no longer by any hindrance of body. Not that those hindrances beset that in us which has veritably seen; it is the other phase of the soul that suffers, and that only when we withdraw from vision and take to knowing by proof, by evidence, by the reasoning processes of the mental habit. Such logic is not to be confounded with that act of ours in the vision; it is not our reason that has seen: it is something greater than reason, reason's Prior, as far above reason as the very object of that thought must be.

"In our self-seeing There, the self is seen as belonging to that order, or rather we are merged into that self in us which has the quality of that order. It is a knowing of self restored to its purity. No doubt we should not speak of seeing; but we cannot help talking in, dualities, seen and seer, instead of, boldly, the achievement of unity. In this seeing, we neither hold an object nor trace distinction; there is no two. The man is changed, no longer himself nor self-belonging; he is merged with the Supreme, sunken into it, one with it; centre coincides with centre, for centre of circles, even here below, are one when they unite, and two when they separate; and it is in this sense that we now

(after the vision) speak of the Supreme as separate. This is why the vision baffles telling; we cannot detach the Supreme to state it; if we have seen something thus detached we have failed of the Supreme which is to be known only as one with ourselves (*Enneads*, VI, ix 10)".

Identity with the transcendent

"Things here are signs; they show therefore to the wiser teachers how the Supreme God is known; the instructed priest reading the sign may enter the holy place and make real the vision of the inaccessible.

"Even those that have never found entry must admit the existence of that invisible; they will know their source, and Principle, since by principle they see principle and are linked with it by like. They have contact with like and so they grasp all of the divine that lies within the scope of mind. Until the seeing comes they are still craving something, that which only the vision can give; this Term, attained only by those that have overpassed all, is the All-Transcending.

"It is not in the soul's nature to touch utter nothingness; the lowest descent into evil, and, so far, into non-being; but to utter nothing, never. When the soul begins again to mount, it comes, not to something alien but to its very self; thus detached, it is in nothing but itself; self-gathered it is no longer in the order of being; it is in the Supreme.

"There is thus a converse in virtue of which the essential man outgrows Being, becomes identical with the Transcendent of Being. The self thus lifted, we are in the likeness of the Supreme; if from that heightened self we pass still higher—image to archetype—we have won the Term of all our journeying. Fallen back again, we waken the virtue

within until we know ourselves all order once more ; once more we are lightened of the burden and move by virtue towards Intellectual Principle (*Nous, Chit*) and through the wisdom in That to the Supreme.

“This is the life of gods and of the godlike and blessed among men, liberation from the alien that besets us here, a life taking no pleasure in the things of earth, the flight of the alone to the Alone.” (*Enneads* VI. ix. 11). This is identical with the attainment of *Kaivalyam* through Yoga.

Indian parallels

Like us all, Plotinus has to use words, but we are asked to see them in the sense of symbolic directions, to be dismissed once the contemplative act has achieved its Term (*nirvana*) as he calls it. Similarly, when we speak of the “system” of Plotinus, we should regard it as a makeshift device since he tells us that all words like vision imply duality. It is a ‘system’ which is a makeshift device, without rigidity or dogmatic doctrinal implication, and more like an analogy than a statement of fixed belief, fact or theory.

Bearing this in mind, then, the nature of reality for Plotinus is one of cyclic emanation and return. The word in Greek for this return to the source is *epistrophe* which is the exact equivalent of the Samskrit *nivritti marga*, the path of return away from all action, sense knowlede, mind and reasonings and all of which is less than the Absolute Self. But most people follow the opposite path, the outward, sense-filled, rational *pravritti marga*.

And in place of creation and evolution, Plotinus regards the whole manifested world, the entire cosmos, as a conti-

nuous emanation (*Greek aporroiai* ; Samskrit *srij*, a pouring forth, emitted or emanated). Plotinus would be in complete agreement here with the Hindu teaching.

Plotinus refuses to split the universe dualistically into matter and spirit. True there are degrees of brightness, but all that exists is of one nature. From the non-dual "The One" (*to hen*) down to the verge of non-existence, there is sameness of substance, of hypostasis. Evil is something negative, without reality. When the universal outpouring, through emanation, reaches the outermost, there is the surge backwards once more to the Source. This surge backwards implies contemplation, the looking of matter to soul, the looking of soul to the universal Self, the looking of the universal Self to the Divine Mind and the looking of the Divine Mind to the pure Absolute or unconditioned Good.

Thus there are there hypostatic grades, all emanating from the Absolute, or the First, as he calls it : with each successive hypostasis depending on what he calls its Prior. Each hypostasis has a polarized two-way activity, one which goes outwards and one which goes inwards to Source.

The universe of Plotinus is all alive, from the lowest particle of matter right up the godlike forms called stars or suns. Through and through, the universe is a living, pulsing whole. What we see as death is only the return of the individual forms back to the general matrix of nature ; but the specific archetypal patterns persist in the divine or universal Mind (*Nous*). The understanding of the unique function of the *Nous* (or *Chit*), about which he writes so much, is the key to his teaching. It stands midway between the All-Soul and The Non-dual One.

Because of being coupled with the body, with the flux of Nature *hule* the soul (*psyche*) wrongly believes itself to be also limited and separate. In this outward-looking mistaken condition, the soul has two aspects, that of reasoning, logical, step by step knowing, which depends upon sense-knowledge, and, still more mistaken, that of unreasoning identification with the animal life-principle, with its appetites, its growth and its need to generate, the vegetative. But the soul is never really lost ; at any moment it can make its return by turning away from the sense-life and looking towards its originating Prior, the *Nous*.

No Condemnation of the World

I hope I have not given an impression that Plotinus' teaching implies a hatred of life and of the world of nature. Far from being despised, the world cannot but be beautiful because it is a reflection of the same Face reflected in millions of mirrors. And, although a reflection, he asks "What reflection could be conceived more beautiful than this of ours? What fire could be a nobler reflection of the fire There than the fire we know here? On what other earth than this could have been modelled after that earth? And what globe more minutely perfect than this, or more admirably ordered in its course, could have been conceived in the image of the self-centred circling of the World of Intelligibles? And for a sun figuring the Divine sphere, if it is to be more splendid than the sun visible to us, what a sun it must be! (*Enneads* II. ix. 4.)

Far from despising the universe, as the Christian ascetics did (and many Buddhists and Hindus'also do). Plotinus sees the universe as the visible appearance of God. "To

despise this sphere and the gods within it," he says "or anything else that is lovely, is not the way to goodness (*Enneads*, II. ix 16). The universe is full of gods, rising in ranks and grades up to the Supreme. They are all, he says, children of the same father. And even here we are not indifferent to the children of our friend. "Now every soul is a child of that father, but in the heavenly bodies there are souls, intellective, holy, much closer to the Supernal Beings than are ours for how can this Cosmos be a thing cut off from That and how imagine the gods in it to stand apart?" (*Ibid.*)

In the same tractate he says :

"For who that truly perceives the harmony of the Intellectual Realm could fail, if he has any bent towards music, to answer to the harmony in sensible sounds ? What geometrician or arithmetician could fail to take pleasure in the symmetries, correspondences, and principles of order observed in visible things ? Consider, even the case of pictures ; those seeing by the bodily sense the production of the art of painting do not see the one thing in the one only way ; they are deeply stirred by recognizing in the objects depicted to the eyes the presentation of what lies in the idea, and so are called to recollection of the truth—the very experience out of which Love arises. Now, if the sight of Beauty excellently reproduced upon a face hurries the mind to that other Sphere, surely no one seeing the loveliness lavish in the world of sense—this vast orderlines, the Form which the stars even in their remoteness display—no one could be so dull-witted, so immovable as not to be carried by all this to recollection, and gripped by reverent awe in the thought of all this, so great, sprung from that greatness.

Not to answer thus could only be to have neither fathomed this world nor had any vision of that other."

For the lover of wisdom, familiar with Indian thought, it is a wonderful experience to read Plotinus for the first time. It is like the meeting of two brothers, long since parted by the villainy of a powerful outsider, in this case the Christian Church. True, two prejudices have to be overcome; the prejudice of terminology and the prejudice of national vanity. But once you enter with sympathy and an open mind, you become aware of the common framework of thinking, the central presence of the Absolute throughout the whole body of Plotinian writings, and the common aim, to make the return of the self to the Absolute possible through a method known to the Greeks as dialectic (the union of the opposites and their transcendence) which is the same as that which is called Yoga in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Thus all the elements familiar to wisdom in India—the presence of a Guru with a Guru succession (*parampara*) in Samskrit, *diadokhes* in Greek, the aim, the happiness and final attainment of identity (*tautosis* in Greek, *samatvam* in Samskrit) are present in Plotinus. It should therefore be a happy occasion for the Hindu philosopher to come to Plotinus who was almost the last of the great gurus of Pagan Europe.

Treasures of Buddhist Literature

Books on Buddhism, texts, commentaries, anthologies, run into hundreds of volumes. Any selection, including mine, must reflect the temperament of the picker and

chooser. In *A Survey of Buddhism*, a work I recommend for its completeness and scholarship, the English-born Bhikshu Sangharakshita says, "The ideal method of studying Buddhism would be to read in the original language a number of carefully selected texts belonging to the Pali, Sanskrit, Chinese, Mongolian, or Japanese canonical Buddhist literature."

But alas, we are not polyglots ; so the next best thing is to take what is available in translation in the languages we know. Even here an enormous selection is required, and as the same author very properly advises, these should be made by a translator who is a Buddhist or sympathetic to Buddhism, even if they are "from the literary point of view, uncouth and clumsy."

Key-Words : The same author refers to what he calls key-words, such as *nirvana*, *samsara*, *dharma*, *prajna* and dozens more which have no single equivalent in English, and whose meaning also depends much upon context, sometimes used in a very special way, as philosophical or even symbolical terms.

The word *nirvana*, for instance, comes from two Sanskrit roots: *nis* "out" and *va* "blow" and so means "blown out" in its crudest pedestrian translation. Used solely philosophically and in terms of the highest spirituality, *nirvana* refers to that absolutist unconditioned state which is always there but clearly understood only when all error, ignorance, relativism, conditioning and concepts have been blown out like an extinguished fire. Man is then beyond the ego-self or soul we call the personal man and is in the free state of enlightenment, called *bodhi*, cool, calm and Joyful. He has wakened to his ever-present identity with

the Self of all, where the bewilderment of the fires of life, both pleasureable and painful has gone.

It was relatively easy for the Christian theologians to argue that nirvana meant annihilation—"Buddhists abolish God and heaven, so what is left? Nothing!" The same superficial treatment has been given to the word dharma, often translated as "duty," "law" or "religion" But again, in the correct sense, dharma, from the root *dhri* "bear," "to support," "to maintain" is that Light referred to by St. John, which every man carries in his heart, independent of all relativistic human laws and duties. Among his last teachings, the Buddha advised his disciples "Be ye lamps unto yourselves!" This however does not mean that a guru-guide to give the advice was not needed.

As both State and Religion in Western countries (and the greater part of the rest of the world which lies within their influence) include notions of duty which involve submission to the dim, human, authoritarian light of politicians and priests, and to conversion to sets of beliefs, both ideological and theological, with wars and killing approved, to refer to dharma in the sense of law and religion destroys its proper symbolic meaning. Such usage, the Mahayanists would say, "kills the Buddha nature." Outright absolutist Buddhism, considered in this way, can be regarded by the establishment authorities as a danger. It immobilizes their power. Indeed, I would go further and say that contemplative discipline is the only way to achieve liberation from all would-be controllers.

From the start, Buddhists have lived apart from society, as all genuine contemplatives must eventually and inevitably do, and even if they seem to be *in* society, they are not *of* it,

but a spiritual fifth column. Many, like Hui Neng and Nan Shan have had to hide themselves away from the jealousies and rivalries of their fellow Buddhists. Absolutism and relativism can never mix without frightful consequences, as we have witnessed in the Buddhist countries of Ceylon and Viet-Nam.

What is a Brahmin? A certain sadness overwhelms me when I consider how Buddhism withered or vanished in India. It is one of the tragedies of Indian History. And yet the Buddhist spirit remained to nourish Indian philosophy. Between the Madhyamika teaching of the Voidness (*sunyata*) of Nagarjuna and the Advaita-vedanta teaching of Erroneous Appearance (*maya*) of Sankara, it is only a matter of backgrounds and epithets. Sankara's tirades against ritual in the context of final emancipating knowledge or wisdom, reflects the spirit of Buddhism. But what he did not dare to openly oppose was caste. By ignoring this touchy subject, or merely skirting over it, Sankara gave a handle to the upholders of caste. Not so the Buddha and his followers. The very fact that even today caste-minded people, even sannyasins, as I know from personal experience, get upset over this, shows how strong must have been the consolidated caste opposition to Buddhism in India. The Buddha in a famous passage in the *Dhammapada* (26) revalued caste. It is a message still needed in India. The translation is Max Muller's :

“A man does not become a brahmin by his plaited hair, by his family or by birth; in whom there is truth and righteousness, he is blessed, he is a brahmin.

“The man who wears dirty raiments, who is emaciated and covered with veins, who meditates alone in the forest,

him I call indeed a brahmin.

“I do not call a man a brahmin because of his origin or of his mother. He is indeed arrogant, and he is wealthy, but the poor, who is free of all attachments, him I call indeed a brahmin.

“Him I call indeed a brahmin, who though he has committed no offence endures reproach, stripes and bonds, who has endurance for his force, and strength for his army.

“Him I call indeed a brahmin who is free from anger, dutiful, virtuous, without appetites, who is subdued and has received his last body.

“Him indeed I call a brahmin who does not cling to sensual pleasure, like water on a lotus leaf, like a mustard seed on the point of a needle.

“Him indeed I call a brahmin who without hurting any creatures, whether feeble or strong, does not kill nor cause slaughter.

“Him indeed I call a brahmin who is tolerant with the intolerant, mild with the violent, and free from greed among the greedy.

“Him indeed I call a brahmin who utters true speech, instructive and free from harshness, so that he offends no one.

“Him indeed I call a brahmin who takes nothing in the world that is not given him, be it long or short, small or large, good or bad.

“Him indeed I call a brahmin who fosters no desires for this world or the next, has no inclinations, and is unshackled.

“Him indeed I call a brahmin who has no interest, and when he has understood the truth, does not say, how, how?

and who has reached the depth of the immortal.

“Him indeed I call a brahmin who in this world has risen above both ties, good and evil, who is free from grief, from sin and from impurity.”

There is also the *Tevigga Sutta* where the Buddha proves to two brahmins that Vedic teachers are ignorant, whereas the true bhikkhu attains to identity with Brahman (the Absolute).

The living side of Philosophy: Notwithstanding, then, that Buddhism has been “absent” from historical India for the last thousand years, Buddha and India have always been together for me. My introduction to Buddhism was about the age of sixteen, when I read Sir Edwin Arnold’s *The Light of Asia*.

It was over one hundred years ago, in 1856 that Arnold, when he was twentyfour, was appointed Principal of the Government Deccan College in Poona. The five years that he spent in India was an enchantment, transforming his life and thought. In essays and poetry he wrote enthusiastically about Indian life. But it was *The Light of Asia*, published in 1879, which most deservedly became a best seller. The secret was in setting the Buddha’s life and teachings in the real Indian background. It gave the atmosphere of India, gathered during these five impressionable years. Without the background, our understanding of the wisdom of the Buddha is weakened.

Here you can see what is wrong with so many works on philosophy, whether Eastern or Western. Without putting yourself imaginatively into their world it is hardly possible to understand Pythagoras, Plato, Diogenes. Many seem to lack this power. To get the full flavour of the Greek

philosophical world, you need to read Herodotus, the most delightful chatterbox who ever lived, or Diogenes Laertios who gives insight-into the gossip stories and incidents in the lives of the philosophers. And how much Plato's personal *Letters* or *Epistles* giving comments and advice, illumine his *Dialogues*. It is all a matter of transportation in time, with a certain capacity to immerse oneself in the subject's life and personality.

This mental shift adds the living dimension to philosophy. Otherwise what have you ? An academic, systematic presentation in which all values most of them without roots in local situations, get completely distorted. The philosopher becomes merely a cardboard figure, a mouthpiece, instead of being the central source of the teaching which, after all, consists merely of words drawn from the language which is again a product of the soil. The background is a limitation, but one which one must thoroughly know. That is why correct reading is essential, and why the absence of background leaves the reader high and dry ; and why so many people are repelled and dismayed by what passes for philosophy. Such important central factors as the presentation of the Guru and the disciple need the historical setting. This can be done only by the sure art of a literary genius. A recent instance of the effectiveness of this method may be seen in the biographical novel dealing with the Emperor Julian (the so-called apostate) by the American novelist Guru Vidai. Romain Rolland contributed to this class of literature in his two biographies of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, and Nataraja Guru has given the same essential background for his teacher, Narayana Guru.

The Light of Asia : It is with these ideas in mind that I

recommend *The Light of Asia*. Arnold's magic managed to convey the immemorial life of India—the vibrant colour, the close participation of the Indian with bird and animal life, the scents and sounds of the village and the Jungle, the towering Himalaya contrasted with the steaming paddy-fields. To this must be added the spiritual background, the psychic inheritance involving the great symbolic tradition, the gods, the temples, the quest for liberation, the ascetics and the teachers.

Thus provided with a reconstructed psycho-physical time-space "occasion" to use Whitehead's term, the reader will get more and more depth of meaning and an inward delight in the very terminology itself, the sonorous Sanskrit or Pali, carrying the aroma of conditionings extending back for thousands of years.

By using the same technique the life of antiquity in Europe can be restored. The commercial, mechanistic-centred world of today has no historical depth. As an instance, the chief article in the *National Geographic* for June 1968, *Vienna, City of Song*, by Peter T. White, has twenty pages of superbly coloured illustrations, and a description of the life of the Viennese, their homes, work, food and amusements. But there is absolutely nothing concerning their culture, of the contributions to psychology or philosophy and there is no mention of Freud, Ehrenfels, Carnap or Wittgenstein, all Viennese and germinal in the process of modern thought. There is something pathetic in this American rootlessness.

How different is Arnold. He sinks himself so completely into the spirit of place that he is able to use, in his Preface, oriental hyperbole in describing the adoration of

the Buddha : "Forests of flowers are daily laid upon his stainless shrines, and countless millions of lips daily repeat the formula, 'I take refuge in Buddha.' "

I cannot leave Arnold without quoting the last lines of his poem :

"Ah ! Blessed Lord ; Oh, High Deliverer !
 Forgive this feeble script, which doth thee wrong,
 Measuring with little wit thy lofty Love.
 Ah ! Lover ! Brother ! Guide ! Lamp of the Law !
 I take my refuge in thy name and thee !
 I take my refuge in thy Law of Good !
 The Dew is on the lotus ! — Rise, Great Sun !
 And lift my leaf and mix me with the wave,
 Om mani padme hum, the Sunrise comes !
 The Dewdrop slips into the shining Sea !"

A Surfeit of Texts : I said there were almost too many books on Buddhism. Buddhists themselves have realized this, and no Buddhist can put hand on his heart and declare, "I *know* this is canonical." Buddhists are of all grades and are human, and there are those who, like many Christians or Moslems, suffer from too much righteousness and goodness. Others, again in sheer abandon, outhip the hippies.

Due to an accident of circumstance and the incredible industry of the Rhys Davids, with their translations from the Pali, Theravada Buddhism got a start well ahead of other equally important branches or "sects". But since 1920 or so, when more and more translations of Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese texts of the Mahayana became available, the Pali Theravada branch lost its prom-

inent place in the general understanding of what Buddhism is, with much less attention given to adopting the ethics of the teaching to society, and more given to the goal of emancipation. Further, instead of the Pali "Three Baskets" (*Tripitaka*), the Rules, Teachings and Higher Doctrines, it is now recognized that source material from the Mahayana is like a big lake to the Theravada pond. Naturally, this revised assessment has been a cause of acrimonious squabbling on the subject of what is 'authorized' or 'pure' doctrine.

Thus confronted by thousands of works, all claiming to be authentic texts, the newcomer is stunned with an *embarras du choix*, a surfeit of riches to choose from. The Pali source books consist of about 15,000 pages, the Chinese about 55,000 (most of it not translated), and the Tibetan *Kanjur* of 100 volumes, and the *Tanjur* another 247 volumes, mostly untranslated. Add to this immense library, the remainder of Mahayana literature, the entire corpus of the Madhyamikas (Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, etc.), that of the Yogacharins (Asanga, Vasubandhu, Dignaga, Dharmakirti, etc.), and then all the Zen writings, and you feel mentally paralysed.

One way out of the difficulty is to remember that, since the Buddhist teaching was transmitted by memory alone, nothing being committed to writing for four hundred years after the death of the Buddha, the best thing to do is to approach it all with an eclectic attitude, and agree with Conze when he writes : "I confess that I do not know what the original gospel of Buddhism was."

Concept Transcending : Any selection of this enormous documentation needs to be read and judged within its historical, geographical, religious, philosophical, temperamenta¹

and psychological background. Each approach, as Hui Neng points out in his *Sutra*, whether "sudden" or "gradual", aims initially or finally at deliverance and emancipation.

One of the secrets of Buddhism is the truth that Buddhahood is not a matter of scholarship, or of vast encyclopedic academic learning. Hui Neng was "illiterate" and was yet the greatest master of Ch'an (Zen). Buddhism is not intellectual; the intellect is the enemy to be completely by-passed, with the mind completely free from attachment to thoughts, seeing "sameness" and becoming totally pure and transparent. Holding on to the slightest word or image, thought or impression shatters the purity of the great non-dual Mind which is the unconditioned Reality, equivalent to Nirvana and Buddhahood. That is why the Buddha always refrained from putting into words what words cannot express. The words he used were for clearing the path towards this ultimate achievement.

There is a state which transcends insight and outlook, in which there is unbroken unity between absolute and relative, expressed by Saraha in the ninth century :

He who clings to the Void
And neglects Compassion
Does not reach the highest stage.
But he who practises only compassion
Does not gain release from the toils of existence.
He, however, who is strong in practice of both
Remains neither in Samsara nor in Nirvana.

De La Vallee Pousson equates the Buddhist *Tathata* (Thatness, Suchness) with Brahman (Absolute). Inherently, we are all potentially Buddhas, *en puissance* as he says. This

is the Mahayanist view also.

From my formative days, both Buddhism and Hinduism have always been taken together. I cannot reject one in favour of the other. I am in accord with Brahmaildya which accepts all philosophical views, disciplines or *darshanas*, all of which, in the end, have to be "let go" without any attachment. The many approaches, whether of Vedanta or Theravada or Mahayana, while useful as discipline for clearing away the thorny jungle in which we are confounded, must in the end get the treatment of the Wittgenstein ladder. The ladder of words or steps, has to be thrown away. Used with discrimination, all the texts have their value (and even Zen extremists make an awful lot of signals without words which are just as distracting).

Theravada Texts: It is easy, nowadays, to get paperback anthologies of Theravada texts. There you will find the universally accepted *suttas* or discourse, from that of the Deer Park at Sarnath, near Varanasi, where the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path were taught, up to the account of Buddha's death (*Maha-Pari-Nibhana Tutta*). There is the great Fire Discourse ("all things are on fire") and there is the *Dhammapada*, from which we have already quoted. This work grips the attention with its sublime but homely wisdom. Many must recall its opening chapter, "All that we are is result of what we have thought," and, "Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time: hatred ceases by love—this is an old rule."

Strict Theravadins (those holding the doctrine of the elders) do not admit the validity of any other texts than those within the Pali *Triptiaka*. On the other hand, the Mahayana (great path) Buddhists do not reject the Pali

The ravada texts, but put it in a primitive or limited category, referring to it as the Hinayana (the lesser path). My own view as I said before, is that these variations in methods, concepts and discipline used are matters of temperament. According to universally accepted texts, the Buddha used the same methods as the authors of the Hindu *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita* used in their treatment of the Vedic background material. The Buddha used the same terminology as the Jainas and the yogis of his time, but re-defined and re-valued its entire meaning. He called himself a brahmin although relatively speaking, he was a king's son and therefore, a warrior (kshatriya). In the same way a critic would be hard put to find essential differences between the Buddhist Dharma's way and that of the Chinese Lao Tzu. It is obvious that the Way of Tao and the way of Zen are the same in their directness and in their paradoxical conclusions. Again, the Indian yogi, by identifying himself with the Absolute (*atma* with *brahman*) comes to the same conclusion as the Buddha, that the notion of a separate self or soul is a relative delusion. In the Oldest of the *Upanishads*, the *Brihadarayaka*, where the Guru Yajnavalkya teaches his disciple-wife Maitreyi that everything, including consciousness-vanishes after death (*na pretya samjna'sti*). This bewilders her, and he has to show her by the analogy of salt in the ocean, that the knowledge of the Absolute as the non-dual Self, not two, is not annihilation, but merely the passing away of the impermanent. In regard to nirvana, the upanishadic teaching is identical with that of the Buddha.

The Milinda-Panha : Before leaving Theravada literature, there is one work which has endeared itself to me. This is the *Milinda Panha* (The Questions of King Menander). This

describes the encounter between the Greek King Menander who ruled over Bactria and the whole of North India in the first or second century B.C., and the Buddhist Bhikkhu Nagasena.

This "masterpiece of Indian prose" as Rhys-Davids calls it, covers in beautiful simple language, all the possible objections to Buddhist doctrine. Part of the fascination of the work is the pitch of curiosity which is maintained. Eightytwo dilemmas are resolved, and 304 puzzling questions are answered. One tricky question is followed by another, and you ask yourself, "Now what will Nagasena have to say to that?" There is also a great deal of that essential background filling which I have said is so necessary for the reader. It is not every day that one is transported into a royal chamber, where two types of majesty, one in silk and one in cotton rags confront each other.

"What shall we discuss?" the king asks. Nagasena replies, "We want to arrive at truth. Let our discussion be about truth." But before beginning, Nagasena makes it clear that the relationship must change from that of a king and subject to that of a guru and disciple. At the end, of course, the king embraces the Dharma.

You must have seen those portraits and statues of the Buddha, where he is seen to tick off one point after another with his right index-finger. This picture rising in the mind when we come upon such items as "the nine kinds of people who give away a secret," "the four ways of dealing with a problem," or "the twenty-five weaknesses of mind." As an example, take the subject of dreams. The king wants to know "what is this which men call a dream?" And Nagasena replies :

“It is a suggestion, O king, coming across the path of the mind which is what is called a dream. And there are six kinds of people who see dreams—the man who is of windy humour, or of a bilious one, or of a phlegmatic one, the man who dreams dreams by the influence of a god, the man who does so by the influence of his own habits, and the man who does so in the way of prognostication. And of these, O king, only the last kind of dreams is true ; all the rest are false.”

The Glamour of Tibet : The Mahayana world is at first sight very strange, with a spectrum extending from the infrared demonic realms of fantastic gods of good or evil omen, up to the ultra-violet fairy heavens, sweet and flowery, and beyond to the utmost limits of human thought. Let us consider Tibetan Buddhism.

Ever since the time of Madame Blavatsky, one hundred years ago, Tibet has vied with India as the centre of the Mysterious East. The works of two authors appeared about forty years ago, whose effect was to increase Western interest in a type of Buddhism as different from that of the Ceylon (Sri Lanka) Pali Theravada, as the bleak Alpine tableland beyond the Himalaya differs from the palmy tropical shores of Southern Asia. One of these authors, Madame Alexandra David-Neel played up the theme of semi-theosophic magic, with her *Mystics and Magicians in Tibet*. The other was a sober but sympathetic American-born Oxford scholar, Dr.W. Y. Evans-Wentz, whose book, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, seemed to support the wildest dreams of Theosophists. At that time, 1929, I was lodging in a vegetarian boarding-house in St. John's Wood, London, and I recollect how elderly

theosophical ladies lost their sleep and lived for days in a kind of Tibetan trance, as ardent in their study of these out-of-this world books as an American youngster might be with a new book of space men cartoon strips. A wave of popular interest in Tibet and lamaseries culminated in the thirties in James Hilton's best seller novel, *The Lost Horizon*, made into a movie which broke all box-office records and gave the name Shangri-La to the Great Tibetan Dream. What quirky by-paths the expression of the numinous takes !

Dr. Evans-Wentz's scholarly work was followed by several other books he wrote, all of which are well worth reading. The book which gives the greatest insight into Tibetan Buddhism is undoubtedly his *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa*; while the *Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation* is the most profound. It is a treatise attributed to the Indian Tantrick Buddhist Padma-Sambhava (The Lotus-Born), also known as the Guru Rimpoche (the Precious Teacher). He was invited to Tibet by the king in 747 A. D. from which date Buddhism-Tantrika became the official teaching in Tibet.

The Beloved Milarepa : The story of Milarepa is so touching and elevating, that it can bring tears to the eyes of the contemplative reader. It begins with the gruesome magic and frightfulness of the dark side of Tantrika. This is followed by a grand description of the guru-disciple relationship between Milarepa and his guru Marpa, which describes all kinds of tests. Finally we read of the lonely courage of Milarepa, how he lived in a cave, half starved amid the ice and snow, naked and of a green colour due to a diet of nettles, so that his sister, when she visits him,

cannot recognize him. And yet he is full of joy and philosophic song. He achieves Buddhahood and has a large body of disciples. The biography ends with his Song of Release, addressed to his biographer-disciple Rechung.

In the Sangsaric Ocean, of the lokas three,
 The great culprit is the impermanent physical body ;
 Busy in its craving search for food and dress.
 From worldly works it findeth ne'er relief ;
 Renounce, O Rechung, every worldly thing.
 Amid the City of Impermanent Physical Forms
 The great culprit is the unreal mind ;
 Submissive to the form of flesh and blood,
 It findeth ne'er the time to realize the nature of Reality:
 Discern, O Rechung, the true nature of the Mind.
 Upon the frontier of the Intellect and Matter.
 The great culprit is the self-born (or created) knowledge ;
 E'er on its guard, 'gainst accidental (for destructive)
 mishaps (to itself),
 It findeth ne'er the time to realize the true nature of
 the Unborn Knowledge (or Truth).
 Keep, O Rechung, within the safe stronghold of the
 Unborn (or Uncreated).
 Upon the frontier of this and of the future life,
 The great culprit is the self-born (or created) consci-
 ousness.
 It seeketh e'er a form it hath not,
 And findeth ne'er the time to realize the Truth :
 Find, O Rechung, the nature of the Truth Eternal.

With this parting song, the beloved Milarepa passed into deep samadhi. He was 84 and the date was 1135 A.D.

Whether as Tantrik Magician, disciple, yogi hermit, or singing Guru, once you have made his acquaintance, you cannot forget this endearing character. It is not only old ladies pensioned off in little rooms on the third floor back who will thrill to read this masterpiece of guru biography, but all who have some spiritual grace and who recognize the call of the numinous Himalaya.

Treasures of Chinese Mahayana : The Mahayana accepts every possible way out of the samsaric delusions (relativism) into the pure splendour of enlightenment (absolutism) called nirvana. It carries in its stride the demonic religious beliefs of the Tibetans and Mongolians, of drums and horns, skulls and thigh-bone trumpets, the magic of mantraspells and prayer machines, the inclusion of sex, the saviour Bodhi-sattva ideal, the collective monastic life and the solitary hermitage, with an infiltration also into art, producing the most sublime painting in the world and a mysticism that rejects all books, and yet able through all this to steer the seeker through yoga and non-duality towards guruhood and contemplative nirvanic victory.

The first great name we have in Mahayana is Nagarjuna (c. 100 A.D.) who used "analytic reason to undermine the categories of reason." He showed the way to the understanding of the Madhyamika (the Middle Way). In his *Karika* (versed doctrinal summary) he said :

There is no difference at all

Between nirvana and samsara...

Bliss consists in the cessation of all thought,

In the quiescence of plurality.

No (separate) reality was preached at all,

Nowhere and none by Buddha.

The full Mahayana teaching found in Chinese Buddhism where the doctrine was grafted onto the Tao of nature absolutism of Lao Tze. Many Buddhist masters and mystics appeared, all of them deriving from the line of teaching begun by the South Indian Bodhi-Dharma and his successors from the sixth century onwards.

The word Zen has become very popular. It is the Japanese form of the Chinese *Ch'an*, which is again derived from the Sanskrit *Dhyana*--thoughtfulness of meditation. There is now a small library of books available on this catchy variety of Buddhism. The reasons for its popularity may be that it appears to require very little scholarship. It appears to be anti-authoritarian, its propositions are highly intuitional, it appears to have no obvious background of ritual, religion, etc., it appears to be unsystematic, it appeals to the poetic sense and has its measure of wit and humour, a certain kind of non-serious and semi-nonsensical profundity.

When you reach the sources, however, it is obvious that this is all a superficial assessment. Zen has its texts also; the *Prajna* group. *Prajna* means Buddha-wisdom, given or natural reality, unconditioned understanding; and works such as the *Lankavatara* sutra, the *Vajrochhedika* (Diamond-Cutter) Sutra; the *Saddharma Pundarika* (Lotus of the True Way) Sutra, and many others. There are also accounts in the works of Suzuki and others, containing the sayings and lives of the Zen masters. Besides Suzuki (who was largely responsible for introducing Zen to the West) there are works by Christmas Humphreys, Alan W. Watts, R. H. Blyth and John Blofeld.

A book I would recommend because it contains the essential texts, is Dwight Goddard's *A Buddhist Bible*. It

contains the famous *Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* (Hui Neng, 687-713). Along with Huang Po (ninth century), *The Diamond Sutra*, and *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation* John Blofeld considers this to be "among the most brilliant expositions of the highest wisdom which have so far appeared in our language." Here is a sample of Hui Neng :

"When you hear me speak about the Void, do not fall into the idea that I mean a vacuity. It is of the utmost importance that we should not fall into that idea because then if a man sits quietly and keeps his mind blank he would be abiding in a state of the voidness of indifference. The illimitable Void of the universe is capable of holding myriads of things of various shapes and forms, such as the sun and the moon and the stars, worlds, mountains, rivers, rivulets, springs, woods, bushes, good men, bad men, laws pertaining to goodness, and to badness, heavenly planes and hells, great oceans and all the mountains of Mahameru. Space takes in all these and so does the voidness of our nature. We say that Essence of Mind is great because it embraces all things since all things are within our nature. When we see the goodness or the badness of other people, and are not attracted by it nor attached to it, then the attitude of our mind is as void as space. In that we see the greatness of our minds..."

The Absolute, or Tao, or Void, or Sunyata, or Nirvana contains all things, but all things are insubstantial, and have sense appearance only. Thus we have almost the opposite definition given by Huang Po. It is the long-sought-for Philosopher's Stone, the Jewel beyond all price, "all-pervading spotless beauty." And with the following

quotation I close a glimpse which may stimulate you to turn and explore for yourself these treasures of Asia and the world. Here then is Huang Po :

“Your true nature is something never lost to you even in moments of delusion, nor is it gained in the moment of Enlightenment. It is the nature of the *Bhuthata* (Such-being-ness). In it is neither delusion nor right understanding. It fills the Void everywhere and is intrinsically of the substance of the One Mind. How then, can your mind-created objects exist outside the Void ? The Void is fundamentally without special dimensions, passions, activities, delusions or right understanding. You must clearly understand that in it there are no things, no men and no Buddhas, for the Void contains not the smallest hairs’ breadth of anything that can be viewed specially ; it depends on nothing and is attached to nothing, It is all pervading spotless beauty : it is the self-existent and uncreated Absolute. Then how can it even be a matter of discussion that the REAL Buddha has no mouth and preaches no Dharma, or that REAL hearing requires no ears, for who could hear it ? Ah, it is a jewel beyond all price !”

The Tiru-K-Kural

If you travel by any of the buses in what used to be known as the State of Madras and is now called the Tamil Nadu (the Land where Tamil is spoken), you are bound to notice, over the driver’s seat, the picture of a bearded patriarch. He is seated like a Yogi ; his left hand is holding a sheaf of palmleaf writings, while his right hand with thumb and index finger joined, makes the gesture which, in

America signifies all is perfect, but which in India is known as the *jnana mudra*, the symbol of a wisdom teacher.

This is the traditional likeness of Tiru-Valluvar. May be he looked like this, perhaps he didn't have a beard. Who knows, for there were no photographs in that dim and distant age when he lived. His work is known as the Tiru-k-Kural. The prefix *tiru* means holy or revered and the word *kural* refers to the distinctive metre in which he wrote. The Tiru-k-Kural is as sacred to all Tamils as any other sacred scripture—Bible, Kuran or Das Kapital, on which a whole system and way of life rests.

The 1330 couplets of the Kural makes it almost equal in length to the 700 quatrains of the Bhagavad Gita. Its metrical style which as we have said, gives it its name, has the rhyme at the beginning of each line and has an intricate and pleasing alliteration.

The forty million population of the Tamil Nadu which has about the same area as England, may be said to be all familiar with this work. That it is so little known compared with works in Sanskrit such as the Upanishads, may be partly due to scholastic neglect, and partly also to a self-contained modesty of the Tamil speaking people themselves. It is only recently that they have been sufficiently roused to vote in power a political party whose policy (among other things) is the defence and promotion of Tamil against what they consider to be an attempt by the Central Government to force the Hindi language on them. This party, the Dravida Munetra Kazhagam (DMK) is the counterblast in modern times of the blast and counterblast of the very ancient Aryan and indigenous politics involving caste and castelessness. And so they have taken the Kural as a basic

work representing the cream of Tamil culture and wisdom, as it is utterly free from Vedic thought, priesthood and ritual—which the DMK and others rightly or wrongly identify with North India and the whole corpus of Sanskrit literature.

Hence the portrait of Tiru-Valluvar in the buses.

This anti-brahmin attitude and the rationlist interpretation of the Kural may be said to be the line encouraged by the politicians. But this is not to say that the Kural is anti-spiritual. The Kural has throughout an implied spirituality, including self-realization and complete deliverance from rebirth.

The spirituality of Tiru-Valluar is robust and reasonable, so it can embrace both the rational and the spiritual. He shows how Absolutist thought can enter into the relativist world. He introduces high values in all the affairs of life. Over and over again he stresses the fact that it is a man's actions which determine his status and spirituality and not his high birth or high talk. He is not writing a book of laws or injunctions such as that of Manu. But instead he indicates a right way of life, leaving it to the reader to make up his own mind about the a-priori truths which he presents. His appeal is direct to the soul or intuition and the judgment of the reader.

Some time ago, chance took me to Pondicherry, erstwhile French settlement and now Indian Union territory. It lies about a hundred miles south of Madras on the Coromandel coast. Having a morning of leisure, I suggested to my host that we might visit Arikamedu, the present-day name of a locality two miles south of Pondicherry. In the time of Tiru-Valluvar, in the hey-day of the Roman Empire,

at the beginning of the Christian era, this place was one of the Greco-Roman trading stations, known to the Greeks as Podouke in that interesting sailor's guide to the Orient, the *Periplus Erithrena* and also mentioned in Ptolemy's geography.

All that we saw today was a coconut palm-fringed lagoon, caused by a sand-bar blocking the entry of the Ginja River into the Bay of Bengal. But everywhere, for square mile or so, beneath the weeds there lay the debris and potsherds as silent witnesses of twenty centuries ago. Details can be found of the excavations and the archaeological evidence in Sir Mortimer Wheeler's books, *Rome Beyond the Imperial Frontiers* (Penguin, 1954). This books, and Stuart Piggott's *Prehistoric India* (Penguin, 1950) are what is called "required reading" in the context of understanding the place of Dravidian India in Indian History and Culture as well as for understanding the background of Indian philosophy.

Like the weeds that cover ancient Podouke, there is a persistent neglect of South Indian or Dravidian India's contribution to wisdom literature. In the surveys and anthologies of religion and philosophy overwhelming importance is nearly always given to Sanskrit or Pali literature. For justice to be done, this situation needs rectification.

My visit to Arikamedu, like my visit to Lothal in Gujarat (another pre-Aryan indigenous port), and my visit to the Museum at Karachi where the pre-Aryan exhibits from the Indus Valley ruined cities are displayed—Siva lingams, figurines and the enormous quantity of steatitie seals showing Yogi figures, exquisite jewelled necklaces, etc.—have all acted like catalysts to stir my historical imagination. They fill in the

missing half of Indian History. This is the world of Tiru-Valluvar. It is the non-Aryan background which he represents, philosophically and culturally. It is a world where the Vedic Aryans were as foreign as the American or Russian or Arab missionaries and propagandists are today as they blunder about, unable to exchange psychologically the complete social and spiritual Weltanschauung of an ancient but still vital people such as the Tamils, for the familiar world in which they have been brought up and which they are conditioned to be the best. The same can, to some extent be said of the North Indian faced with the task of understanding the non-Vedic and non-Aryan Southern World.

If such is the case today, how much more must it have been at the time of the author of the Kural! Then, a thousand years of Aryanism and Vedic Brahmin domination had changed the indigenous pattern of life in North India. But in South India, protected by mountains and jungles (the Dandakaranya of legend), the primordial ways of life and language were not disturbed to any great degree by invasions, although the South was often a haven of security for many in revolt against Aryan rule. Today the Dravidian South is still flourishing and still sustaining itself on the spirituality expressed in the Kural.

Unlike the continentally conditioned Aryans who disliked and feared the sea, the Indian people whether of the Indus Valley or of the coastal regions further south, were expert sailors and traders overseas. From the Mediterranean to the China Seas, the whole world was one to them. A verse (192) in the third century poetic anthology, the Tamil *Purananuru*, strikes a very modern global note :

“To us all towns are one, all men are kin,
Life’s good comes not from other’s gift nor ill ;
Man’s pains and pain’s reliefs are from within.
Death’s no new thing ; nor do our bosoms thrill
When joyous life seems like a luxurious draught.
When grieved, we patient suffer ; for we deem
This much-praised life of ours a fragile raft
Borne down the waters of some mountain stream,
That o’er huge boulders roaring seeks the plain
Tho’ storms, with lightning’s flash, from darkened skies
Descend, the raft goes on as fates ordain.
Thus have we seen in visions of the wise.
We marvel not at greatness of the great ;
Still less despise we men of low estate.”

I venture to say that the sentiments expressed here with the global wisdom so manifest, raise this approach to an absolutist level, far beyond the proud national spirit in such renowned statements of outlook as in the speech attributed to Pericles by Thucydides or Lincoln’s Gettysberg address, both of which are marred by an inherent national pride. In imperial or national states, the highest model was the statesman. In the Tamil society it was the wise man, the philosopher or guru. What a difference !

It is this openness which is so refreshing and this is what distinguishes the world of the Tamils from that of the Vedic people.

Of Tiru-Valluvar little is really known. He is traditionally believed to have been a weaver living in Mayilapur the modern Mylapore, now a busy part of the city of Madras. The name means Peacock-Town. Two stories relating to the poet-sage are given by T. R. Sesha Iyengar in his

informative book, *Dravidian India* which we give below :

“Valluvar, the author of the Kural, was once asked whether the married state or celibacy was chiefly to be desired. He gave no answer, but invited the inquirer to wait and see. Valluvar's wife was drawing water from the well. He called to her and, leaving the bucket hanging, midway, she instantly came. At dinner he complained that the cold rice burnt his mouth, and his wife immediately fanned it. Next day, while the sun shone clear and bright, he cried out that he could not see to read. She brought at once a light. ‘This’, said Valluvar to his visitor, ‘is domestic felicity. If you can have such a wife, marry ; otherwise prefer celibacy.’

“It is further related of this model wife, that, having during her life performed unhesitatingly her husband's every behest, at her death she asked him the first, last and only question. ‘Tell me,’ she said, ‘Why at your marriage did you require me of a needle and a pot of water?’ ‘It was,’ he replied, ‘that I might with the needle pick up a grain of rice should one ever be spilt, and dip it in the water’. No grain of rice had ever been suffered by this model house-wife to fall in serving her husband's meal. The needle and the pot of water had never been used. She died content”.

Tiru-Valluvar is unique in his method of applying absolutist values to raise the individual out of the swamp of relativistic life. What he is advocating is the way of life of an enlightened man, whether he is a householder, a king or a commoner. Thus, although his work is divided into three divisions, *Aram*, *Porul* and *Inbam*, which correspond to the Sanskrit *Dharma* (right behaviour), *Artha* (worthwhile values), and *Kama* (love, pleasure), the fourth which is *Moksha* or

liberation, while inserted as chapter 36, is implied throughout as the ultimate release from suffering and rebirth.

There are many editions of the Kural in translation. The concision of Tiru-Valluvar's maxims or aphorisms are usually so plain that error in translation is rarely possible. The Kural grips the reader from the start. You feel the wisdom pressure of the author because of his sincerity and because you feel he really knows what he is saying and counselling. Here are some of my favourite verses :

Should a man lead the householder's life in the way of right behaviour, what is there to attain by other ways of life (46) ?

Sweeter than ambrosia is the food into which one's children have dipped their little hands (64).

Right conduct ennobles man ; (but) evil ways make him base-born (133).

If you desire to speak, speak (words) that have sense ; never speak such words as are vain (200).

The height of all wisdom is to abstain from evil even to our enemies (203).

To give a thing to the destitute is charity ; all else is of the nature of barter (221).

To be approached for alms is painful until a smile is seen on the face of the beggar (224).

What are compassion and its opposite ? To refrain from killing and to be engaged in killing. The opposite of right behaviour is to eat the flesh of a slaughtered animal (254).

Far better than a thousand sacrifices rich in oblations is abstention from the flesh of an animal that is killed (259).

All life worships with folded hands the man who neither kills nor feeds on flesh (260).

Deadly is the arrow (though straight) and sweet is the lute (though bent); judge, therefore, what men are by what they do (and not by what they seem) (279).

Should what is hateful the world be given up, there is no need either for the shaven head or the matted locks (280).

He lives in the hearts of all who is never false to his own heart (294).

In all treatises which we consider infallible, there is no virtue that is considered higher than truthfulness (300).

They that are wrathful are as good as dead; they that have given up their wrath are as good as they that have renounced (310).

To share one's bread and to love all forms of life—this is at the head of all that is enjoined by writers of scripture (322).

The basest of all follies is to hold as eternal things that are transient (331).

Whatsoever a man renounces, from the pain thereof he becomes free (341).

Twofold is the nature of the world; one is the endowment which brings wealth, and the other which brings wisdom (374).

To the man of learning every country is his, and so also every city: why, then, does a man cease to learn till his death (397)?

The non-studious man who desires to speak is like the damsel without the two breasts desiring womanhood (402).

The wealth of all wealth is the wealth of listening (to the wise). That wealth is not at the head of all wealth (411).

Not to let the mind roam where it will, to withdraw it from evil, and direct it to that which is good—this is wisdom (422).

The crow invites its kind to share its food without concealing it ; fortune abides only with the men of a similar nature (527).

He who does not find pleasure in the midst of pleasures—he is free from pain in the midst of pain (629).

Those who dote on their wives will never achieve great aims ; they that are devoted to their designs look upon it as an undesirable thing (901).

To show reason to a drunkard is like searching with a lamp for a man sunk under water (929).

Though placed above, they who are not great can never be great ; and though placed below, they who are not low can never be low (973).

The world ultimately comes to the plough, wander where it may ; for at the head stands husbandry, hard though it be (1031).

They alone live who live by tilling the soil ; the rest have to fawn on them for food and are their slaves (1033).

Were there no beggars to approach them, where would the splendour be of them that give (1059) ?

Though you only beg for water for a cow, nothing brings so much disgrace to the tongue as begging (1066).

At a mere word the good melt ; but the mean, like the sugarcane, yield under pressure (1078).

Only among lovers are seen looks of indifference as of strangers (1099).

From where did she obtain this fire which burns when keeping away and cools when approached (1104) ?

The axe of love batters the door of self-control bolted with the sense of shame (1251).

I would indeed hide my passion, but against my will, it bursts out like the sneeze (1253),

When I said, "We love each other better than all others," she sneered at me saying, "You love me better than whom—than whom?" (1314).

Sweet are quarrels in love when the quarrels end in the bliss of a close embrace (1330).

Jung : Dreamer-Explorer of The Soul

Of all the twentieth century philosophic geniuses in Europe, I give without hesitation, the topmost place to the Swiss explorer of the psyche, Carl Gustav Jung. My reasons for this view will become evident in the course of this essay. If I had to point to any man who knew the soul of Europe, it would be to Jung, for the understanding of the Self was his whole life's work. He wrote as a scientist, producing those masses of facts and references in support of his discoveries which academic convention demands. And yet his writing was as easy as his insights and interpretations were always fresh and stimulating. To read Jung is to enter into that inner world of the self which we all know and yet rarely, so rarely, get the chance of expressing. What follows will not be a summary of anything like the whole of Jung's literary works. I can only provide glimpses to show you the kind of man he was and the broad vision he had on many subjects.

It was Jung who introduced the ideas introvert and extrovert, the collective unconscious, archetypes, synchroni-

city and showed how Oriental discoveries such as the Chinese *Yin-Yong* and the Indian notion of the *Dvandva* the pairs of opposites continually changing the one into the other, was found exactly in the ancient Greek theory of *enantiodromia*.

Let us consider the man. Jung wrote about his youth :

“Somewhere deep in the background I always knew that I was two persons. One was the son of my parents who went to school and was less intelligent, attentive, hard-working, decent and clean than many other boys. The other was grown-up-old in fact—sceptical, mistrustful, remote from the world of men, but close to nature, the earth, the sun, the moon, the weather, all living creatures, and above all, close to the night, to dreams and to whatever ‘God’ worked directly in him.”

He continued,

“What I am here unfolding, sentence by sentence, is something I was then not conscious of in any articulate way, though I sensed it with an overpowering premonition and intensity of feeling. At such times I *knew* I was worthy of myself, that I was my true self. As soon as I was alone, I could pass over into this ‘Other’ personality No. 2.

“The play and counterplay between personalities No. 1 and No. 2 which has run through my whole life, has nothing to do with a ‘split’ or dissociation in the ordinary medical sense. On the contrary it is played out in every individual. In my life No. 2 has been of prime importance, and I have always tried to make room for anything that wanted to come to me from within. He is a typical figure, but he is perceived only by the very few. Most people’s conscious understanding is not sufficient to realize that he is also what they are.”

Is this experience so rare? What Jung writes is something I can myself endorse, and I could have written this almost word for word from my own childhood experience. I can also endorse his further remarks :

“ From the beginning I had a sense of destiny, as though my life was assigned to me by fate and had to be fulfilled. This gave me an inner security and thought I could never prove it to myself, it proved itself to me. I did not have this certainty, *it* had me....

“ Often I had the feeling that in all decisive matters I was no longer among men, but was alone with God. And when I was ‘ there ’ where I was no longer alone, I was outside time ; I belonged to the centuries ; and He who then gave answer was He who had always been, who had been before my birth. He who always is was there. There, talks with the ‘ Other ’ were my profoundest experiences ; on the one hand a bloody struggle, on the other supreme ecstasy.”

From these quotations from his autobiography you can judge the sort of man Jung was. For most of his long life (1875-1961) he had to communicate in the academically accepted form. Yet his style always remained refreshing and it was never dull or heavy. More and more in his later years, however, he left aside all concessions to the scientific, empirically biased world and its traditions of style, and finally, in his autobiography, got out of it altogether. This will be noticed in what he wrote about the now well-known *I-Ching* the Chinese oracular *Book of Changes* :

“ In the exploration of the unconscious we come upon very strange things, from which a rationalist turns away with horror, claiming afterwards that he did not see anything. The irrational fullness of life has taught me never to

discard anything, even when it goes against all our theories (so shortlived at best) or otherwise admits of no immediate explanation. It is, of course, disquieting, and one is not certain whether the compass is pointing true or not ; but security, certitude, and peace do not lead to discoveries. It is the same with the Chinese mode of divination. Clearly the method aims at self-knowledge, though at all times it has been put to superstitious use.

“ I of course am thoroughly convinced of the value of self-knowledge but is there any use in recommending such insight, when the wisest of men throughout the ages have preached the need of it without success? Even to the most biased eye it is obvious that this book (the *I-Ching*) represents one long admonition to careful scrutiny of one's own character, attitude and motives. This attitude appeals to me and has induced me to undertake this foreword. Only once before have I expressed myself in regard to the problem of the *I-Ching* ; this was in a memorial address in tribute to Richard Wilhelm (who translated the *I-Ching* into German). For the rest I have maintained a discreet silence. It is by no means easy to feel one's way into such a remote and mysterious mentality as that underlying the *I-Ching*. One cannot easily disregard such great minds as Confucius and Lao-tse, if one is at able to appreciate the quality of the thoughts they represent ; much less can one overlook the fact that the *I-Ching* was their main source of inspiration. I know that previously I would not have dared to express myself so explicitly about so uncertain a matter. I can take this risk because I am now in my eighth decade, and the changing opinions of men scarcely impress me any more ; the thoughts of the old masters are of greater value to me

than the philosophical prejudices of the Western mind.”

Jung severed his early association with Freud. He could not agree with Freud's interpretation of everything in terms of the sex drive, and his desire to make his theories dogmas, with Jung as his chief successor. The break came very soon after Jung's publication of his *Psychology of the Unconscious* over fifty years ago.

Jung had nothing to do with the psychological method of word-association and the couch. He was a qualified physician and took to the study of soul which in his youth was a subject practically unknown. His researches led him far away into deep studies of religion and philosophy, both of the East and the West. The following quotation will bear this out :

“When we now speak of man we mean the indefinable whole of him, an ineffable totality, which can only be formulated symbolically, I have chosen and term ‘self’ to designate the totality of man, the sum-total of conscious and unconscious existence. I have chosen this term in accordance with the Eastern philosophy, which for centuries has occupied itself with those problems that arise when even the gods cease to become human. The philosophy of the *Upanisads* corresponds to a psychology that long ago recognized the relativity of the gods. This is not to be confounded with such a stupid error as atheism. The world is as it ever has been, but our consciousness undergoes peculiar changes.”

Jung's major contribution was the discovery or rediscovery of the unconscious in its collective as well as its group and personal aspects. This otherness, which is the background of the conscious, communicates through symbols, dreams in the personal sense, through art, and through

sudden inexplicable world movements, all of which defy rational explanation.

"The hypothesis of a collective unconscious," he said, "belongs to the class of ideas that people at first find strange but soon come to possess and use as familiar conceptions." The same can be said of his theory of the archetypes, "universal image that have existed since the remotest times."

His knowledge of Greek and Latin which, we are told he could read as easily as his native German, and his skill in learning language (even Swahili when he was in Africa) enabled him to pursue his enormous studies and researches with terrific zeal, and by going to the sources, dispensing with translations and commentaries of others, gave him immediate access to the original thought. He was modest, although wherever he went, his originality and the ideas that poured out of him made him the centre of any gathering. He lived most of his time in his native Switzerland, spending his best days at Bollingen near Zurich. There he lived in an ancient house where he refused to have electricity, telephone or pipe water, intentionally keeping as close as he could to the centuries old conditions of the Europeans of the past whose knowledge of the spirit was far greater than that of modern man who had cut himself off from his natural spiritual roots. He wanted to get as close as possible to the collective unconscious of European man.

He was very suspicious of the rationalizing mind. In one of his popular books, *The Undiscovered Self* he declared,

"As his (man's) consciousness has broadened and differentiated, so his moral nature has lagged behind. That is the great problem before us today. *Reason does not suffice*"

His approach was that of the mystic or the yogi. In his autobiography he tells the reader :

"In this book I have devoted considerable space to my subjective view of the world, which, however, is not a product of rational thinking. It is rather a vision such as will come to one who undertakes deliberately, with half-closed eyes and somewhat closed ears, to see and hear the form and voice of being."

Note the phrase "with half-closed eyes" ! Jung visited India twice. About India he said it was "entering into a community of nations whose guiding principles have anything and everything on the programme except detachment and peace of the soul." I do not think this can be denied. He continued, "The man whose interests are all outside is never satisfied with what is necessary, but is perpetually hankering after something more and better which, true to his bias, he always seeks outside himself. He forgets completely that, for all his outward successes, he himself remains the same inwardly, and he therefore laments his poverty if he possesses only one automobile when the majority have two..... The externalization of life turns to incurable suffering, because no one can understand why he should suffer from himself. No one wonders at his insatiability, but regards it as his lawful right, never thinking that the one-sidedness of this psychic diet leads in the end of the gravest disturbances of equilibrium. That is the sickness of Western man, and he will not rest until he has infected the whole world with his own greedy restlessness.

"The wisdom and the mysticism of the East have, therefore, very much to say to us, even when they speak their own inimitable language. They serve to remind us that we in our

culture possess something similar, which we have already forgotten, and set aside as trifling. The life and teaching of Sri Ramana (Maharshi) are of significance not only for India, but for the West too. They are more than a *document humain*; they are a human message to a humanity which threatens to lose itself in unconsciousness and anarchy."

In his autobiography he wrote :

"Day after day we live far beyond the bounds of our consciousness without our knowledge, the life of the unconscious is also going on within us. The more the critical reason dominates, the more impoverished life becomes ; but the more of the unconscious, and the more of myth we are capable of making conscious, the more of life we integrate. Over-valued reason has this in common with political absolutism; under its domination the individual is pauperized."

Here is Jung's analysis of what went wrong with Western man :

"When the spiritual catastrophe of the Reformation put an end to the Gothic Age with its impetuous yearning for the heights, its geographical confinement, and its restricted view of the world, the vertical outlook of the European mind was forthwith intersected by the horizontal outlook of modern times. Consciousness ceased to grow upward, and grew instead in breadth of view as well in knowledge of the terrestrial globe. This was the period of the great voyages and of the widening of man's ideas of the world by empirical discoveries. Belief in the substantiality of the spirit yielded more and more to the obtrusive conviction that material things alone have substance, till at last, after nearly four hundred years, the leading European thinkers and investigators came to regard the mind as wholly

dependant on matter and material causation."

On the credo of the present scientific establishment, Jung made the following wry comment :

"The spirit of the age cannot be compassed by the processes of human reason. It is an inclination, an emotional tendency that works upon weaker minds, through the unconscious with an overwhelming force of suggestion that carries them along it. To think otherwise than our contemporaries think is somehow illegitimate and disturbing; it is even indecent, morbid or blasphemous, and therefore socially dangerous for the individual. He is stupidly swimming against the social current. Just as formerly the assumption was unquestionable that everything that exists takes its rise from the creative will of a God who is spirit, so the nineteenth century discovered the equally unquestionable truth that everything arises from material causes. To day the psyche does not build itself a body but, on the contrary, matter, by chemical action, produces the psyche. This reversal of outlook would be ludicrous if it were not one of the outstanding features of the spirit of the age. It is the popular way of thinking, and therefore it is decent, reasonable, scientific and normal. Mind must be thought to be an epiphenomenon of matter. The same conclusion is reached if we say not 'mind' but 'psyche' and in place of matter speak of brain, hormones, instincts or drives. To grant the substantiality of the soul or psyche is repugnant to the spirit of the age, for to do so would be heresy."

During his whole lifetime, Jung took an unpopular position. In the introduction to his autobiography Aniela Jaffe, the Editor, tells us: "More than once, he said grimly,

‘They would have burned me as a heretic in the Middle Ages.’ ”

In psychological studies also Jung went against the stream. It has been easy for the authorities of our time, Science, the State and the Churches, to adopt for propaganda use the discoveries of the Behaviourists such as Pavlov’s “conditioned reflex.” Jung was quite aware of the situation :

“Now,” he wrote, whether it is a question of understanding a fellow human being or of self-knowledge, I must in both cases leave all theoretical assumptions behind me. Since scientific knowledge not only enjoys universal esteem but, in the eyes of modern man, counts as the only intellectual and spiritual authority, understanding the individual obliges me to commit *les majeste*, so to speak, to turn a blind eye to scientific knowledge. This is a sacrifice not lightly made, for the scientific attitude cannot rid itself so easily of its sense of responsibility. And if the psychologist happens to be a doctor who wants not only to classify his patient scientifically, but also to understand him as a human being, he is threatened with a conflict of duties between the two diametrically opposed and mutually exclusive attitudes of knowledge on the one hand, and understanding on the other. The conflict cannot be solved by an either-or but only by a kind of two-way thinking, doing one thing while not losing sight of the other.”

This two-way thinking is precisely what the Indian yogi of Sankara’s *Vivekachudamani* and Vyasa’s *Bhagavad Gita* is required to exercise—the constant discrimination between the Absolute and the relative, known as *nityaanitya-vastu-Vivekah*.

Jung was well acquainted with what he charmingly described in two essays, as "the dream-like world of India," not in any pejorative sense but fully sympathetic with the collective unconscious as it manifested itself in this ancient land.

He recognized the guru figure as one of the great symbolic and universal archetypes common to humanity everywhere. Both Goethe in *Faust* and Nietzsche in *Also sprach Zarathustra* he said, "play upon something that reverberates in the German soul—a primordial image—as Jacob Burckhardt once called it—the figure of a physician or teacher of mankind. The archetypical image of the wise man, the saviour or redeemer, lies buried and dormant in man's unconscious since the dawn of culture; it is awakened whenever the times are out of joint and human society is committed to a serious error. When people go astray they feel the need of a guide or teacher or even of a physician. These primordial images are numerous, but do not appear in the dreams of individuals or in works of art until they are called into being by the waywardness of the general outlook. When conscious life is characterized by onesidedness and by a false attitude, then they are activated—one might say 'instinctively'—and come to life in the dreams of individuals and the visions of artists and seers, thus restoring the psychic equilibrium of the epoch."

It should be fairly obvious that Jung's term, the unconscious, is really in most cases a synonym for the Absolute as the unconditioned Self. The Absolute can communicate or speak mainly through the vast positive-negative process of nature, and through dream symbols, as well as by hunches, warnings, and the signs and omens

which sensitive people have, especially if they are on the lookout for them. The unconditioned Self also communicate through the irrational productions of artists, and when most art is wild and chaotic or "meaningless," we may be sure we are in for bad weather psychologically and socially.

In his autobiography, Jung confessed he always paid attention to his dreams. They belonged to the No. 2 personality mentioned at the beginning of this article. From his middle life certainly, Carl Gustav Jung knew what his life work was; he knew what he was doing. He was a human being listening to the unconscious or to the Absolute, in both its aspects, the personal and the collective. He did his best throughout his life, to bring back this understanding of the Absolute to mankind and to the European particularly through his own spiritual heritage. That this was his major work is implied in the following passage :

"It (the Self) transcends our powers of imagination to form a clear picture of what we are as a self, for in this operation the part would have to comprehend the whole.... but the more we become conscious of ourselves, through self-knowledge, and act accordingly, the more the layer of the personal unconscious that is superimposed on the collective unconscious will be diminished. In this way there arises a consciousness which is no longer imprisoned in the petty, ever-sensitive personal world of the ego, but participates freely in the wider world of objective interests. The complications are no longer egotistic wish-conflicts, but difficulties that concern others as much as oneself... We can now see that the unconscious produces concepts which are valid not only for the person concerned, but for others as well, in fact for a great many people and possibly for all."

There is a saying that God is not mocked, and the ancient Greeks knew that *khoros* or overweening pride, or too much, was followed by *hubris* disaster or extraordinary behaviour, to be finally ended in *ate* or punishment. Jung was troubled with what he saw of the perilous condition of present-day humanity. "Virtually everything depends on the human soul and its functions," he said, "It should be worthy of all the attention we can give it, especially today when everyone admits that the weal or woe of the future will be decided neither by the attacks of wild animals nor by natural catastrophes, nor by the danger of worldwide epidemics, but simply and solely by the psychic changes in man. It needs only an almost imperceptible disturbance of equilibrium in a few of our rulers' heads to plunge the world into blood, fire and radio-activity."

In the same long essay, he said ; "There is no sense in formulating the task that our age has forced upon us as a moral demand. We can, at best, merely make the psychological world situation so clear that it can be seen even by the myopic, and give utterance to words and ideas which even the hard of hearing can hear. We may hope for men of understanding and men of good will, and must therefore not grow weary of reiterating those thoughts and insights which are needed. Finally, even the truth can spread and not only the popular life."

One of the great archetypal notions is that of the paired opposites, the *dvandvah*, or the *yin-yong*, the marriage of heaven and hell. Jung showed how this archetype was found all over the world, Chinese and Indian and European spirituality and religion, and the cyclic recurrence, the one of the twin always turned into or becoming the other. This was

recognized by the ancient philosopher Herakleitos, and called by him *enantiodromia*, the turning of one into its opposite. People are tired of politics, hence the revolt of the young. Not so long ago we had the welfare state, but this has been converted into the impoverished or even bankrupt state. The oppressive and hypocritical morality of the 19th century has turned into the amoral or immoral permissive state of the 20th century. If the soul of man is ignored or shut out, the unconscious, personal or collective, will burst out in ways that may not be pleasant to contemplate. We are already witnessing universal chaos in the economic world. How did it all happen? No economist knows, but we can assume that it is linked up with the principle or archetype of the *dvandva* or the *enantiodromia*. Knowledge and reason and logic upon which hitherto all the guidelines and thought of the modern world is based, is now shown as futile and unavailing to solve the problems facing mankind. What is left is the answer from within, where reasons does not enter in. Carl Gustav Jung has correctly analysed the situation, pointing out the schizophrenic nature of the modern world. And only a return of the spiritual with a recognition of the Self or the unconscious or Absolute can save us all. The *Bhagavad Gita* (iv. 7) declares that when conditions reach a climax of madness, confusion and degeneration, then the Absolute manifests itself—it emanates itself (*srjaamyaham*). Many religious people see this as a personal avatar, but a better reading of the text is to see it as a more general emanation not limited to one person or one place.

We take our conditioned consciousness to be the whole of our reality, but Jung has proved that this cannot be. Our being, a little drop in the ocean of being or existence, ignores

this boundless infinite ocean ; but this ocean remains and makes its presence felt through dreams and such things as apparently causeless upspringing ideas which appear phenomenally all over the world. Narayana Guru (1854-1928) wrote :

The conscious is conditioned,
The Unconditioned does not become conscious ;
What is conditioned is unreal
But what is unconditioned is real, indeed !

Thus the discoveries of an Indian sage come close to the thought of a wise man of the West.

Many a philosopher has postulated the concept of the Absolute, both in the East and the West ; but the great work lies in interpreting the unconscious or the unconditioned reality in terms of the problems confronting us in the world today.

It is in doing this that this man of immense scholarship and yet a man of dreams, is so important.

The works of Carl Gustav Jung are immense, and are all stimulating in their originality and cover the thought of mankind, East and West, ancient and modern. As I write this in July 1975, it is the centenary of his birth. But Jung belongs to the ages. There are great figures, inventors, poets, statesmen, scientists, artists, who have all contributed to the wonder of the modern world. But only Jung, has revealed the infinitely vast dimensions of the soul.

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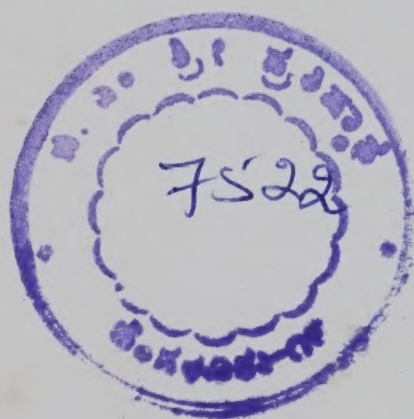
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